



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Updated for the EYFS reforms effective 1 September 2026

Policy statement

Wise Owls Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. The welfare of the child is paramount. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Prevent duty, and the Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures in line with the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP).

This policy applies to directors, employees, bank and agency staff, students, volunteers and any other adults working within the setting. It should be read alongside our Staff Code of Conduct and linked safeguarding procedures.

Designated safeguarding leads

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Anna Olley
- Deputy DSLs: Alison Holdsworth and Laura Bryson

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, provides ongoing support, advice and guidance to practitioners, liaises with local statutory children's services and safeguarding partners, oversees referrals and allegations, and helps ensure safeguarding practice is understood and implemented throughout the setting.

Safeguarding principles

- Children have the right to be safe, listened to, respected and protected from abuse, harm and neglect.
- Every person looking after children must be alert to concerns in a child's life at home, in the setting or elsewhere.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff must act on concerns and must not assume somebody else will do so.
- Children's individual needs, communication, development, SEND, family circumstances and lived experience are considered when recognising and responding to concerns.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, and with other professionals when children need additional support or protection.

Types of abuse, harm and safeguarding concerns

Staff are trained to recognise physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. We also recognise wider and specific safeguarding risks, including:

- domestic abuse and coercive control, including the impact on children who see, hear or experience its effects
- female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing and other harmful practices
- child sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation
- radicalisation and extremism
- abuse linked to faith or belief and oral infant mutilation
- online harm and inappropriate sharing of images

- inappropriate behaviour by adults working with children, including excessive one-to-one attention, sexualised comments or breaches of professional boundaries
- patterns of absence, significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in wellbeing, unexplained injuries or concerning comments that may indicate abuse, harm or neglect

Staff responsibilities

- Safeguard children and promote their welfare at all times.
- Know and follow this policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, whistleblowing arrangements and linked procedures.
- Be alert to signs of abuse, harm or neglect and act without delay.
- Complete safeguarding training that meets the EYFS criteria and renew it at least every two years. More frequent refreshers may be provided where appropriate.
- Take part in safeguarding discussion, supervision, staff meetings, INSET and ongoing professional development.
- Disclose promptly any information that may affect suitability to work with children, including relevant arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings, subject to the legal rules on protected convictions and cautions.
- Report concerns about the conduct of another adult, including low-level concerns or unsafe practice, without attempting to investigate them personally.

If you have a concern about a child

1. Respond

- Listen carefully and remain calm.
- Take the child seriously and reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you may need to share the information with people who can help keep them safe.
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate. Use only minimal, open prompts where necessary.

2. Record

- Make a dated, factual record as soon as possible using the Cause for Concern process.
- Record the time, what was seen or heard, the child's exact words where possible, who was present and any action taken.
- Use a body map where relevant. Do not take photographs of injuries on a personal device.

3. Report

- Share the concern immediately with the DSL Anna Olley or a Deputy DSL Alison Holdsworth or Laura Bryson.
- Do not delay because you are uncertain whether the concern is serious enough.
- Do not investigate the concern yourself.

4. Refer and escalate

- The DSL uses Brighton & Hove's Right Support at the Right Time guidance and the Pan Sussex procedures when deciding next steps.
- Where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, the setting will immediately notify the local authority children's social care team in line with local procedures.
- Front Door for Families (FDFF) is contacted where required.
- In an emergency or where a child is in immediate danger, call 999.
- If a practitioner believes appropriate action has not been taken, they must escalate the concern using safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures.

Safeguarding records are kept securely and are accessible only to those with a professional need to know.

Information sharing and confidentiality

We maintain confidentiality but recognise that protecting a child from harm takes priority over keeping information confidential. Relevant and accurate information is shared with parents and carers, other professionals, police, children's social care and Ofsted where appropriate and lawful.

Parents and carers will normally be informed when concerns are shared unless doing so may place a child or another person at increased risk, prejudice an investigation, or professional advice indicates that information should not be shared at that point. Staff must never promise absolute confidentiality.

Safeguarding records and personal information are stored and handled securely in accordance with data protection legislation and the EYFS.

Allegations and concerns about adults working with children

Any allegation or concern about a member of staff, director, student, volunteer, agency worker or other adult working with children must be reported immediately to the DSL or an appropriate director. If the concern relates to the person who would normally receive the report, it must be raised with another director/DSL and the LADO as appropriate.

- The setting will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay where the allegation or concern meets the relevant threshold and will follow LADO advice.
- The setting will not conduct its own safeguarding investigation before seeking appropriate advice.
- Police will be contacted where a child is in immediate danger or where advised.
- From 1 September 2026, registered providers must notify Ofsted of any allegation of harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children at the premises. This applies whether the alleged incident happened on the premises or elsewhere.

For the purposes of this requirement, "harm" has the meaning set out in section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and includes ill-treatment or impairment of a child's health or development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person.

- Ofsted must be told about the allegation and the action taken as soon as reasonably practicable and in all cases within 14 days.
- Where a person is dismissed, removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, because they harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm, the setting will make any required referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Low-level concerns and whistleblowing

Staff must report behaviour by an adult that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct or safeguarding expectations, even where it does not appear to meet the threshold for a formal allegation. This supports a culture in which concerns are identified early and professional boundaries remain clear.

All staff, including students and volunteers, can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Concerns will be taken seriously. If a staff member feels unable to raise a concern internally, or believes a genuine concern has not been addressed, they may use external whistleblowing routes, including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line or Ofsted.

Safer recruitment and suitability

Wise Owls follows safer recruitment procedures and records required checks on the Single Central Record. Our procedures include:

- identity and right-to-work checks
- verification of qualifications where relevant

- exploration of employment history, gaps and reasons for leaving
- at least one written reference before recruitment, with Wise Owls normally seeking two verified references as an additional safer recruitment measure
- no open references and no reliance on applicants to obtain their own references
- comparison of application information with references and follow-up of discrepancies or vague information
- an enhanced DBS check and Children's Barred List check where required
- additional checks where a person has lived or worked overseas, where appropriate

September 2026 change: Wise Owls must not allow a new employee or volunteer who requires the check to begin working or volunteering until the required enhanced criminal records and barred list check has been received. A person whose suitability has not been checked must not have unsupervised contact with children.

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption for regulated activity with children has been removed. Supervised paid or unpaid work involving teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children may therefore be regulated activity when the statutory frequency or other conditions are met. Wise Owls checks DBS and barred-list eligibility accordingly.

All volunteers who fall within the EYFS requirement must have the appropriate enhanced criminal records and barred list checks. The limited exception for supervised volunteers who only help occasionally, such as a parent helping on a trip, is considered in line with the current EYFS and DBS guidance.

Staff and prospective staff must tell Wise Owls about information that may affect their suitability to work with children. Suitability is kept under review.

Safeguarding training and supervision

All practitioners receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria in Annex C of the EYFS statutory framework. Training is renewed every two years and supported by ongoing guidance, discussion and refresher activity.

Training covers safeguarding terminology; categories and indicators of abuse, harm and neglect; factors that can contribute to harm; safe working practice; recognising concerns at the earliest opportunity; responding, recording and referring; the setting's procedures; relevant legislation and guidance; professional responsibilities; and the roles of other safeguarding professionals.

DSL training additionally covers safe organisational culture, safer recruitment, policy implementation, local child protection procedures, referral and escalation, managing allegations against staff and internet safety.

Supervision gives staff regular opportunities to discuss children's development and wellbeing, safeguarding concerns, professional practice and any support or coaching needed.

Child absence

We follow up absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period or is absent without notification, we attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. We consider patterns and trends in absence, the child's vulnerability, family circumstances and known safeguarding concerns. Where concerns remain, the DSL considers referral to DFF/Children's Social Care and/or police involvement in accordance with local procedures. See Child Absence Procedure.

Safer sleep - September 2026 requirements

Babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely. For children under two, Wise Owls follows the explicit safer-sleep requirements now contained within the EYFS:

- Children are placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface. Babies aged 12 months and under are placed to sleep in a cot.
- Sleep spaces contain only a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and appropriate lightweight bedding that cannot cover the child's head, or an appropriately fitted baby sleep bag.

- Where blankets are used, children are placed feet-to-foot with blankets securely tucked in below shoulder level.
- Cots do not contain toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges, straps or other unnecessary items.
- Children are protected from becoming too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16-20°C.
- Children's heads remain uncovered.
- Babies under six months always have an adult in the same room for every sleep.
- All sleeping children are frequently checked and remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Practitioners follow current NHS safer-sleep advice and relevant setting procedures. Safer sleeping practice is monitored as part of safeguarding, welfare and supervision.

Food, eating and weaning

Children are adequately supervised while eating and are within sight and hearing of an adult. Meals, snacks and drinks are healthy, balanced and nutritious and the setting has regard to the EYFS nutrition guidance. Staff follow individual dietary, allergy and medical information and our food safety procedures. Safer eating and weaning practice is treated as an important part of children's welfare and safeguarding.

Mobile phones, smart watches, cameras and electronic devices

Our safeguarding arrangements cover mobile phones, cameras and all electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities.

- Personal mobile phones and smart watches must be put away securely and must not be worn or carried while staff are working directly with children.
- Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or record nursery children or to store information about them.
- Only nursery-approved devices and systems may be used for photographs, recordings or nursery communication.

Photographs and videos of children are kept to the minimum necessary for their intended purpose and are stored and shared only through nursery-approved secure systems. Nursery devices are routinely cleared of photographs and videos once these have been appropriately uploaded or stored.

- Staff must not check personal messages, notifications or social media while supervising children, except where specifically authorised in an emergency.
- Internet and online safety are overseen by the DSL and concerns are managed through safeguarding procedures.

See Online Safety Policy for further information about the use of mobile phones, smart watches, cameras and electronic devices.

Children's screen use - September 2026 requirement

From 1 September 2026, providers must have regard to Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. At Wise Owls, screen use is purposeful, limited and appropriate to children's age and development. It does not replace responsive adult interaction, active play, outdoor experiences, books, conversation or hands-on learning. Staff consider the content, context, duration and purpose of any screen-based activity and maintain appropriate online-safety controls.

Intimate care

Intimate and personal care is provided respectfully in designated areas that protect children's dignity while balancing privacy with safeguarding and support needs. Staff follow the Nappy and Intimate Care Procedure and Lone Worker Policy. Children are encouraged to develop independence according to their age and stage, and any safeguarding concern noticed during personal care is recorded and reported.

Visitors and security

- Reasonable steps are taken to prevent unauthorised people entering the premises.
- All pre-arranged visitors are asked to provide photographic identification on arrival. Their identity and purpose for visiting are checked before they are admitted to the setting.
- Contractors and other professionals attending the premises are also expected to provide appropriate identification.
- The identity and purpose of visitors are checked.
- Visitors are appropriately supervised and are not permitted to observe children's intimate or personal care.
- Children are released only to individuals authorised by their parent or carer and do not leave the premises unsupervised.

Banned dog breeds - September 2026 requirement

Registered childcare must not be provided from premises where a banned dog breed, including an XL Bully type, is kept or present at any time. This applies even where the dog's owner holds a certificate of exemption. Wise Owls will not permit a banned dog breed onto the nursery premises.

Specific risks and how we respond

- FGM, breast ironing and harmful practices: recognise indicators and refer/escalate through the DSL and local safeguarding procedures.
- Radicalisation: follow the Prevent duty. Concerns are reported to the DSL, who seeks appropriate local advice and makes referrals where required.
- Abuse linked to faith or belief and oral infant mutilation: recognise indicators and refer through local safeguarding procedures.
- Domestic abuse: recognise the impact on children of seeing, hearing or experiencing domestic abuse and coercive control. Wise Owls participates in Operation Encompass and responds to information received in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Babysitting and private arrangements

Private babysitting arrangements between staff and families are outside the nursery's contractual responsibility and are made independently between the family and the individual member of staff. Some Wise Owls staff choose to use the Bubble babysitting app in a personal capacity, and families are welcome to find and contact them through Bubble if they wish to arrange babysitting. Wise Owls does not arrange, manage, recommend or take responsibility for babysitting booked privately or through Bubble. Any safeguarding concern that comes to a member of staff's attention through a private babysitting arrangement must still be reported promptly through the appropriate safeguarding channels.

Curriculum and safeguarding culture

Through the EYFS, children are supported in developmentally appropriate ways to understand safety, boundaries, emotions, relationships, consent and asking trusted adults for help. We promote respectful relationships, equality, inclusion, resilience and a positive self-image and celebrate each child's background, language, family and identity.

Key contacts

Service	Contact
Front Door for Families (FDFF)	01273 290400 FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk
FDFF out of hours	01273 335905 or 01273 335906
LADO	01273 290400 ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Emergency	999
Sussex Police	101 for non-emergencies
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

Linked policies and procedures

Staff Code of Conduct; Whistleblowing; Behaviour; Prevent Duty; Mobile Phone, Smart Watch and Camera; Online Safety; Nappy and Intimate Care; Safer Sleep; Food and Nutrition; Allergies and Safer Eating; Visitor; Equal Opportunities; Child Absence; Admissions; Lone Worker; Safer Recruitment; Staff Handbook; Complaints; Data Protection and Confidentiality.

Key statutory and local guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Prevent duty guidance
- Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
- Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance
- Department for Education guidance on screen use in early years settings
- NHS safer-sleep advice

Version control

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Previous version	February 2026
Updated	September 2026
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Next review	September 2027, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures change