



Dorchester Pre-School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

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Content	Page Number
1.0 Child Protection	1-16
1.1 Children's Rights and Entitlements	1-3
1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection	3-9
1.3 Pre-existing Conditions and Injuries	
1.4 Looked After Children	9-11
1.5 Uncollected Child	11-13
1.6 Missing Child	13-15
1.7 Use of Mobile Phones & Smart Devices	15-16



Dorchester Pre-School

1.0 Child Protection

1.1 Children's rights and entitlement

Policy statement

At Dorchester Pre-school

- We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- We promote children's right to be *strong, resilient and listened to* by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- We help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- We work with parents/guardians to build their understanding of, and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

What it means to promote children's rights and entitlements to be 'strong, resilient and listened to'.

To be **strong** means to be:

- Secure in their foremost attachment relationships where they are loved and cared for, by at least one person who is able to offer consistent, positive and unconditional regard and who can be relied on;
- Safe and valued as individuals in their families and in relationships beyond the family, such as day care or school;
- Self-assured and form a positive sense of themselves – including all aspects of their identity and heritage;
- Included equally and belong in early year's settings and in community life;
- Confident in abilities and proud of their achievements;
- progressing optimally in all aspects of their development and learning;
- To be part of a peer group in which to learn to negotiate, develop social skills and identity as global citizens, respecting the rights of others in a diverse world; and
- To participate and be able to represent themselves in aspects of service delivery that affects them as well as aspects of key decisions that affect their lives.

To be **resilient** means to:

- Be sure of their self-worth and dignity;
- Be able to be assertive and state their needs effectively;
- Be able to overcome difficulties and problems;
- Be positive in their outlook on life;
- Be able to cope with challenge and change;
- Have a sense of justice towards self and others;
- Develop a sense of responsibility towards self and others; and
- Be able to represent themselves and others in key decision making processes. To be



Dorchester Pre-School

listened to means:

- Adults who are close to children recognize their need and right to express and communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas;
- Adults who are close to children are able to tune in to their verbal, sign and body language in order to understand and interpret what is being expressed and communicated;
- Adults who are close to children are able to respond appropriately and, when required, act upon their understanding of what children express and communicate; and
- Adults respect children's rights and facilitate children's participation and representation in imaginative and child centred ways in all aspects of core services

1.1 Safeguarding children and child protection

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

Policy statement

In accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, this pre-school is committed to identifying child and family needs early to prevent concerns from escalating. We 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 the training received by designated persons from the Oxfordshire County Council Early Years and Childcare Service and adheres to the Oxfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Procedures.

Where a child requires support beyond universal pre-school provision, we utilize the Family Help framework. Family Help coordinates a multidisciplinary team to deliver a single, co-produced Family Help Plan tailored to the family's needs, combining what was previously referred to as targeted early help and Section 17 support.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for identifying children who may benefit from Family Help, making referrals to the local authority Family Help team, and actively participating in inter-agency assessments and planning meetings if required.

Our safeguarding and Family Help practices are strictly anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, and culturally informed, ensuring that a family's background or past negative experiences with authorities do not act as a barrier to them receiving supportive care.

Procedures

Staff and volunteers

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who coordinates child protection issues is **Helen Morris (Manager)** or **Andrea Reich (Deputy Manager)** in her absence (both of whom have received full training).
- Our designated officer (member of the management committee) who oversees this work is **the Chairperson**.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.



Dorchester Pre-School

- Applicants for posts within the provision 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 Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed.
- 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 Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the Provision or has access to the children.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the criminal records disclosure reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and - details of who obtained it.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements 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.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the provision so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- Staff are strictly prohibited from using any technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, to manipulate, alter, or recreate images or videos of children or staff members.

All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;
 - deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion,



Dorchester Pre-School

domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.

- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation of children such as through internet abuse and Female Genital Mutilation that may affect or may have affected children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedure for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person (or other staff member if they identify the problem) makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
- We use the detailed procedures and reporting format as advised by appropriate agencies.

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 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;



Dorchester Pre-School

- 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.
 - The manager acting as the Designated Person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity. ▪ Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns; we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- Dorchester Pre-School has a Safeguarding Children folder which contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).
- We keep a copy of this document alongside procedures set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board and Education child protection service; we follow the detailed guidelines given.
- All members of staff have had basic child protection training and are familiar with the Safeguarding Children folder. All staff members follow the procedures for recording and reporting concerns.
-

Informing parents/guardians

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in great danger.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues (Dorchester Direct) 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 well-being of children or where an



Dorchester Pre-School

allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Dorchester Direct and Local Authority Designated Officer (for allegations against staff) are also kept

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the provision, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children, which includes:
 - Inappropriate sexual comments;
 - Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or
 - Inappropriate sharing of images
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the provision, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances; the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

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



Dorchester Pre-School

authority guidelines for making referrals.

- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 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 in 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

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential 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 the child's social care worker 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



Dorchester Pre-School

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Children Act (1989 s47)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- GDPR (2018)

Further Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (under revision 2012)
- What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2006)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CW2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (HMG 2008)
- Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa-gov.org.uk

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Safeguarding Children (2010)

1.4 Looked after children

Policy Statement

At Dorchester Pre-school, we are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All of our staff are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most looked after children will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that



Dorchester Pre-School

not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has an impact on their emotional well-being.

Most local authorities do not place children under five with foster carers who work outside the home; however, there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who works.

At Dorchester Pre-school, we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on these two important concepts, attachment and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing positive dispositions for learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them

Principles

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- We offer places to two-year-old children in exceptional circumstances who are in care. In such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for at least two months and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer and where the placement in the setting will last a minimum of three months.
- We offer places for funded three and four-year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We expect that a child will have been with a foster carer for a minimum of one month and has formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks.
- We will always offer 'stay and play' provision for a child who is two to five years old who will still be settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.
- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer, we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated child protection coordinator.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parents or foster carer's role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social



Dorchester Pre-School

worker.

- At the start of a placement there is a professionals meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:
 - The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
 - How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
 - The child's sense of self, culture, language(s) and identity – and how this is to be supported;
 - The child's need for sociability and friendship;
 - The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
 - How special needs will be supported?
- In addition, the care plan will also consider:
 - How information will be shared with the foster carer and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
 - What contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
 - What written reporting is required?
 - Wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and
 - With the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings and fun-days, alongside the foster carer.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her key person sufficient to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.
- In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support.
- Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning and development.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents



Dorchester Pre-School

Further guidance

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfEE 2000)
- Who does what: How Social Workers and Carers can Support the Education of Looked after Children (DfES 2005)
- Supporting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors (DfES2006)

Policy statement

1.5 Uncollected child

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day, Dorchester Pre-school puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child. The child will receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Procedures

- Parents of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:
 - Home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
 - Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
 - Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
 - Names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a child minder or grandparent. - Who has parental responsibility for the child?
 - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they inform us in writing of how they can be contacted.
- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child; they provide us with written details of the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents on how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number.
- We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures in the event that their children are not collected from Dorchester by an authorised adult within one hour after the setting has closed and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises.
- If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:
 - The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
 - If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
 - If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting – and whose telephone numbers are recorded on



Dorchester Pre-School

- the Registration Form – are contacted
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- If no-one collects the child after the setting has closed and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children. We contact our local authority children's social care team, (office hours 8.00am – 5.00pm). Out of these hours, Oxfordshire Direct will transfer calls to the Emergency Duty Team.
- The child stays in the setting under the care of two fully-vetted workers until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent or relative if they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed, tel. **0300 123 4666**.

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Safeguarding Children (2010)

Policy statement

1.6 Missing child

At Dorchester Pre-school children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outing's procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the Pre-school Manager/Deputy.
- The Pre-school Manager/Deputy calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The Pre-school Manager/Deputy will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Pre-school Manager/Deputy talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Pre-school Manager/Deputy contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.



Dorchester Pre-School

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Pre-School Manager/Deputy and/or other staff back in the setting. If the pre-school leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing asks children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Pre-school Manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.
- The Pre-school Manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Pre-School Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Pre-school Manager.
- Staff take the remaining children back to Dorchester Pre-school.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Pre-school Manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
- The Pre-school Manager or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Pre-school Manager together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee or owner speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The estimated time the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff cooperate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.



Dorchester Pre-School

- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Pre-School leader will need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the pre-school leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Pre-School leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threat against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Policy statement

1.7 Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Smart Device Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy ensures the safety and welfare of all children in our care by mitigating the risks associated with the misuse of personal electronic devices. This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and temporary staff, as well as students, volunteers, contractors, and agency workers. For the purpose of this policy, **"personal smart devices"** includes but is not limited to: mobile phones, smartwatches (with camera, messaging, or internet capabilities), tablets, digital cameras, and fitness trackers with data connectivity

Usage Restrictions and Storage

Storage on site: Upon arrival, all personal mobile phones and smart devices must be switched off (or set to silent) and securely stored in the office area behind a closed door. Parents visiting the setting may keep their phone on them but they cannot be used whilst on the premises.



Dorchester Pre-School

Permitted Times: Personal devices may only be accessed and used during official, unpaid breaks in the office or off the premises (e.g., lunch breaks), they must only be used when children are not present.

Smartwatches: Smartwatches may be worn only if data, cellular, and camera functions are disabled, or if the device is set to "Do Not Disturb" to prevent notifications from disrupting childcare. If a smartwatch has an active camera or recording function, it must be stored away with mobile phones.

Setting and Work-Related Devices

Pre-School Devices: Only official, pre-school-owned devices (e.g. setting tablets or digital cameras) may be used to take photographs or record videos of children for learning journeys, assessments and marketing, and only with the signed consent from the parent/guardian. The Pre-school mobile phone will be taken outside by a member of staff, for emergency purposes only. This allows communication with staff in the outside facilities to the staff inside. Photos and recordings are not permitted to be kept on the Pre-School phone outside of the setting or transferred to another phone or tablet to be printed. If pictures are taken these need to be printed straight off and deleted. Parents' contact details will be kept on the mobile phone for the length of time their child attends the setting and will abide by the GDPR at all times. The Pre-School mobile phone will have a locked passcode.

Data Security: Official devices must never leave the premises without explicit authorization from the Manager and must be subject to robust filtering and password protection.

Contacting the Setting: If family members or external agencies need to contact a member of staff urgently during the working day, they must call the pre-school's landline on or the official setting mobile.

AI-Generated Harms and Deepfakes (KCSIE 2026 Alignment)

Staff are strictly prohibited from using any technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, to manipulate, alter, or recreate images or videos of children or staff members. The creation or sharing of any digitally altered imagery, including AI-generated deepfakes or "nude/semi-nude" fabrications, will be treated as a critical safeguarding breach and referred directly to the police and the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer (LADO).

Out-of-Hours and Social Media Expectations

Staff must not use personal devices to contact parents, carers, or children via phone, text, or social media. All communication must go through official pre-school channels.

Staff must not post photos, comments, or information about the pre-school, its children, or its families on their personal social media accounts.

Non-Compliance and Breaches

Any violation of this policy will be taken seriously and may result in formal disciplinary action,



Dorchester Pre-School

up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

If a device is suspected to contain unauthorized images or data of a child, the device will be confiscated, and the matter will be immediately escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the LADO, and the police.

Name	Position	Signature	Date
	Chair		
	Manager		
	Deputy Manager		
	Assistant		
	Assistant		
	Assistant		