



Bright Start Montessori

Crofton Oak Scout & Guide Hut, Crofton Road, Orpington, Kent. BR6 8JE

Tel: 01689 850904 **Email:** admin@brightstartmontessori.co.uk

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6.0 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults' policy

The staff at Bright Start Montessori fully recognise their responsibility to the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting children and young people from harm. We believe that our pre-school should provide a warm, caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and emotional development of each child.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DSLO):

Michelle Steadman

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Officers (DSL):

Leanne Sinfield

Ciarah Cook

Karen Chandler

In keeping with local borough guidance there will always be an DLSO/DDLSO available when children are present.

Aim

At Bright Start Montessori we are committed to safeguarding children, we have worked hard to develop a nurturing environment that is supported by a culture of vigilance to protect every child in our care. Our commitment is demonstrated through our consistent and coherent strategy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our strategy is highlighted below:

- The individual's needs come first and we are committed to empowering them and promote their right to be strong, listened to and heard.
- We uphold a culture of safety in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm. We support their development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- We appropriately respond to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur, with help and support provided at the earliest opportunity. We work in collaboration with the appropriate agencies to ensure the individual's needs are met.
- We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and are dedicated to increasing safeguarding confidence, knowledge and good practice throughout our training and learning programmes for adults, advocating support and representation for those in greatest need.



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NB: A 'young person' is defined as 16–19-year-old. At Bright Start Montessori, they may be a student, apprentice educator, or parent/carer.

A 'vulnerable adult' (see guidance to the Care Act 2014) as: *'a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of 'mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation'.* At Bright Start Montessori, this person may be a service user, parent/carer of a service user, or a volunteer.

Key Commitment 1

- All staff receive adequate training in child protection matters and have access to the setting's policy and procedures for reporting concerns of possible abuse and the safeguarding procedures of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP)
- All staff have adequate information on issues affecting vulnerability in families such as social exclusion, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability, together with training that takes account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
- We use available curriculum materials for young children, taking account of information in the Early Years Foundation Stage, that enable children to be *strong, resilient, and listened to and heard*.
- All services seek to build the emotional and social skills of children and young people who are service users in an age-appropriate way, including increasing their understanding of how to stay safe.
- We adhere to the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.
- All settings follow procedures of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) for safeguarding and any specific safeguarding procedures such as responding to radicalisation/extremism concerns. Procedures are followed for managing allegations against staff, as well as for responding to concerns and complaints raised about quality or practice issues, through whistleblowing and escalation.



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Key Commitment 2

- All staff are trained in line with the Criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS (November 2025). Our training providers are The Early Years Alliance and LB Bromley (BEM).
- The staff at Bright Start Montessori receive training every two years to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures. This message is reinforced routinely in staff meetings, supervisions and other communications.
- We foster a culture that any concerns can be shared at any time, providing staff with opportunities to talk privately about any concerns they may have.
- Safeguarding training is renewed every two years. The DSLO ensures support, advice and guidance for all staff to meet their safeguarding responsibilities through regular supervisions and team emails.
- There are procedures in place to prevent known abusers from coming into the organisation as employees or volunteers at any level, including a robust system that enforces safer recruitment.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of every person undertaking the work of the organisation in any capacity.
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff, or any other person undertaking work whether paid or unpaid for the organisation, where there is an allegation of abuse or harm of a child. Procedures differentiate clearly between an allegation, a concern about quality of care or practice and complaints.
- There are procedures in place for reporting abuse of children or a young person in the setting.
- There are procedures in place for reporting safeguarding concerns where a child may meet the s17 definition of a child in need (Children Act 1989) and/or where a child may be at risk of harm, and to enable staff to make decisions about appropriate referrals using local published threshold documents.
- There are procedures in place for reporting abuse of a vulnerable adult in the setting.
- There are procedures in place in relation to escalating concerns and professional challenge.
- There are procedures in place for working in partnership with agencies involving a child, or young person or vulnerable adult, for whom there is a protection plan in place. These procedures also take account of working with families with a 'child in need' and with families in need of early help, who are affected by issues of vulnerability such as social exclusion, radicalisation, domestic violence, mental illness, substance misuse and parental learning disability.



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- These procedures take account of diversity and inclusion issues to promote equal treatment of children and their families and that take account of factors that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture.
- There are procedures in place for record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing, which are in line with data protection requirements.
- We follow government and Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) guidance in relation to extremism.
- The procedures of the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) must be followed.

Key Commitment 3

- We have a DSLO, and 4 deputy DSL who are responsible for carrying out child, young person, or adult protection procedures.
- The DSL is responsible for overseeing all child, young person or adult protection matters.
- The DSL ensures they have links with statutory and voluntary organisations regarding safeguarding children.
- The DSL ensures they have received appropriate training on child protection matters and that all staff are adequately informed and/or trained to recognise child abuse in the categories of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect.
- The DSL ensures all staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities that affect children that arise from inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture and that these receive full consideration in child, young person, or adult protection related matters.
- The DSL ensures that staff are aware and receive training in social factors affecting children's vulnerability including, but not limited to:
 - social exclusion
 - domestic violence and controlling or coercive behaviour
 - mental illness
 - drug and alcohol abuse (substance misuse)
 - parental/carer learning disability
 - radicalisation



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- The DSLO ensures that staff are aware and receive training in other ways that children may suffer harm and stay up to date with relevant contextual safeguarding matters:
 - abuse of disabled children
 - fabricated or induced illness
 - child abuse linked to spirit possession
 - sexually exploited children
 - children who are trafficked and/or exploited
 - female genital mutilation
 - extra-familial abuse and threats
 - children involved in violent offending, with gangs and county lines.

The DSL ensures they are adequately informed in vulnerable adult protection matters.

Key commitment 4

- There are procedures in place to ensure staff recognise children and families who may benefit from early help and can respond using local early help processes. DSLs should ensure all staff understand how to identify and respond to families who may need early help.
- Staff are supported to make the right decisions that enable timely and appropriate action to be taken.
- DSLs contribute towards local safeguarding arrangements to ensure that the views of the sector are heard at the highest level by:
 - Finding out how education and childcare are represented at a strategic level within the Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) structures.
 - Sharing their knowledge of the experiences of children in their cohort with BSCP

Forms of Abuse and Neglect

A child may be being harmed in one or more of the following ways:

Physical abuse

This involves causing physical harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult and may include:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning and suffocating.
- Munchausen's syndrome or Fabricated Induced Illness



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- Breast Ironing
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is illegal in the UK and must be reported to the police

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development and may include:

- deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate
- serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones
- may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- Identity Based Bullying (IBB) when a person is persecuted because of their appearance, race, culture, gender and gender expression, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability or sexual orientation.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. They may include:

- Physical contact including penetrative (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways in preparation for abuse ('grooming'), including via the internet.
- Child sexual exploitation where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It can include:

- Physical neglect (failing to provide basic necessities like food, appropriate clothing, protection from harm)
- Medical neglect (failure to deal with necessary healthcare)
- Educational neglect (failure to provide the child with a suitable education)
- Emotional (the failure to respond to the child's emotional needs. This can include affluent neglect)



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Other Considerations:

- Witchcraft and spirit possession
- 'Honour' Based Violence
- Modern Slavery (including forced labour, bonded labour, human trafficking and child slavery)
- Radicalisation
- Child on child abuse when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age and may take various forms
- Bullying is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others and is covered in many aspects of abuse mentioned above.
- "Disguised compliance" involves a parent or carer giving the appearance of co-operating with child welfare agencies to avoid raising suspicions, to allay professional concerns and ultimately to diffuse professional intervention.

Vulnerable or SEND Children

Bright Start Montessori recognises some children are more vulnerable than others, for example children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children from disadvantaged backgrounds or families in crisis. Children with SEND can be particularly at risk due to their dependency levels, they may have a cognitive impairment that prevents them from understanding appropriate adult behaviour or difficulties communicating concerns. We advocate inclusive practice, we have an intimate care policy in place and would work collaboratively with any parent of child with SEND to develop health care plans that provide their child with the freedom to learn and play within a safe environment.

We create and maintain a safe environment, but we also encourage children to manage 'risks' which are appropriate for the individual child's level of understanding. We know that understanding the consequences of taking 'risks' in a carefully prepared environment, for example negotiating space and trip hazards in the outside area, extends children's thinking and abilities, as they consider a safer alternative.

Most importantly, we encourage children to have a voice, to speak freely and be listened to with interest. This value builds a child's self esteem and self worth, it provides a nurturing environment, to which children have a sense of belonging and community.



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Legal references

- *The Children Act 1989 (s.47)*
- *Protection of Children Act 1999*
- *The Children Act 2004 (s.11)*
- *The Childcare Act 2006 (s. 40)*
- *Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006 (updated 2018)*
- *Care Act 2014*
- *The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*
- *The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012*
- *The Children and Families Act 2014*
- *The Education Act 2002*
- *The Children and Adoption Act 2002*
- *The Children and Adoption Act 2006*
- *The Children and Young Person Act 2008*
- *The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009*
- *The Apprenticeships, Skills, Learning and Children Act 2009*
- *The Education Act 2011*
- *The Equality Act 2010*
- *Serious Crime Act 2015*
- *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015*
- *Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations 2018*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*
- *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance 2017*

We aim to follow safeguarding advice as provided in statutory, local and national governmental guidance, including:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* ([link](#))
- *Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (updated 2023)* ([link](#))
- *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, advice for practitioners 2015* ([link](#))
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* ([link](#))
- *Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2024)* ([link](#))
- *Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (updated 2024)* ([link](#))
- *FGM Mandatory Reporting Procedures 2016 (updated 2020)* ([link](#))
- *Child Sexual Exploitation Feb 2017 (DfE, 2017)* ([link](#))
- *Bromley Threshold of Needs May 2023* ([link](#))