

# PRECIOUS TIMES CHILDCARE SERVICES POLICIES

## Child Protection / Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

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### Introduction

Here at Precious Times Childcare Services we fully recognise that we have a responsibility to safeguard children. In 'Working together to Safeguard Children' safeguarding children is defined as

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

We understand that this is a holistic term and that safeguarding action may need to be taken to protect children from a range of issues including but not limited to:

- All types of abuse
- Bullying / peer on peer abuse
- Racism
- Radicalisation / extremist behaviour
- Substance misuse
- Specific issues related to the local area
- Female genital mutilation or other cultural practices eg breast ironing
- Forced marriage
- Poor parenting
- Domestic violence / witnessing domestic violence
- Technology influences

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff, students and volunteers working within the setting.

### Statement of Intent

Precious Times works closely with children, parents and the community to ensure the holistic welfare of children is safeguarded and to ensure that children feel safe.

### Aims

- Create a culture of vigilance amongst our staff where our all children's welfare is promoted and where appropriate action is taken for children who need extra help or who may be suffering or are likely to suffer harm.
- Ensure we have a staff team who all have basic awareness training with named DSO's having level 2 training (level 2 training is refreshed every 2 years). So staff have up to date knowledge, access regular updates through online forums, newsletters and the Local Authority
- To provide children with a secure environment where they feel safe and build strong attachments through the implementation of the key person system
- Have a positive impact on the safety and welfare of the children attending our setting
- Equip staff with the knowledge and confidence so they are able to exercise their professional judgement in keeping children safe.
- Always ensure that the welfare of children is seen as paramount and any concerns about a child are taken seriously

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- Create an environment within Precious Times which encourages children to develop a positive self-image free from any discrimination
- Help children to establish and sustain relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults
- Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence
- Support children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches
- Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children
- Promote positive behaviour consistently and understand the risk of peer on peer abuse
- Identify children who are part of a vulnerable group as they may be more at risk while recognising that any child can be susceptible. We understand that children with additional needs / SEN / disabilities may be more susceptible to abuse and there are additional barriers when recognising the signs of abuse or neglect in these children ie understanding, speech and mobility.
- Ensure we meet Welfare Requirements with regards to supervision (in sight or hearing) and ratios; children are always adequately supervised – on or off site. This includes but is not limited to school drop / off and collection, trips and outings as well as during the day both inside and outside.
- To take action quickly if we have any worries or concerns, this doesn't only apply to signs of abuse but also unexplained low attendance or sudden disappearance of a child.

This policy works alongside and compliments other policies including:

- Whistle Blowing
- Confidentiality
- Disciplinary and grievance
- Behaviour management
- Recruitment and Employment

These policies along with our procedures for performance management, induction and employment form our Staff Behaviour Policy.

### **Legal Framework and Key Documents**

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1984
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order
- The Children Act 2004
- The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The Serious Crime Bill 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The Prevent Duty: for schools and childcare providers
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

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- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

### Multi Agency Working

We understand the importance of partnership working and good communication especially around these matters.

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidelines which are underpinned by the document – Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- We have access to the LSCB guidelines and they are available for staff and parents to see.
- We notify Ofsted of any serious incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- We have procedures for contacting the Local Authority regarding child protection or safeguarding issues, including knowing how to contact social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for us and the LSCB to work well together.
- We ensure that written records are made in an appropriate and timely way, retained and that these are shared where necessary
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the LSCB guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

**Children subject to: CIN and CP.** We understand the need to support these children as they are classed as being vulnerable. We work alongside the families as well as the agencies involved to support the families. We attend the relevant meetings and are involved in drawing up their support plans, notes are kept on the actions needed, we know how to contact workers if there are any further concerns about them.

### Recruitment, Staffing and Volunteering

- Our recruitment procedures are secure and robust ensuring the suitability of staff and volunteers working within our setting. Please see our Recruitment and Employment Procedure for more information.
- All staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders etc which may affect their suitability to work with children upon the application form and if need be during their time working for the company.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks 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 DBS for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers and students who are not employed by us do not work unsupervised, and until staff members DBS checks are through they do not work unsupervised.
- The checks which are conducted on staff members or volunteers are recorded on our Single Central Record.
- Additional checks are carried out on individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act 1999 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.

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- Staff's induction process includes information about Safeguarding / Child protection Procedures.
- Staff are made aware of the importance of recognising and reporting any inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children – see the Whistleblowing policy for further information.
- If there is indication or evidence to suggest that a member of staff has failed to execute their duty to safeguard a child or children at the setting they will be subject to the disciplinary procedure under the grounds of gross misconduct.
- We ensure that all staff are fully aware that any kind of corporal punishment is never used by anyone to any child in our care.
- Safeguarding is always an item on staff meeting agendas, staff are made aware that the Designated Safeguarding Officer is always contactable (either in person or over the telephone)
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- We have procedures for recording the details of all visitors to the setting, these are never left unaccompanied.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children ie fob access to rooms, key code access, signing in and checking identification.

### **Training**

We seek out regular training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they have confidence in recognising the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

All staff access the PLA's online training on Child Protection, with more senior staff attending the level 1 course, DSO's attending the level 2 training which is updated every 2 years. We ensure that staff keep their knowledge and skills up to date regularly through online forums, GOV.UK email updates and updates/information from the Local Authority. Staff also access some specialist training in specific areas such as Prevent Duty, FGM and Safer Recruitment.

### **Curriculum**

- As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage children are made aware of and can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We encourage an open and close relationship, so children are aware they are able to speak with us as and when required.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

### **Prevention, Early Intervention and Early Help Assessment**

From November 2015 there are some changes around how families are supported with the aim being to support families through Prevention and Early Help Services, ensuring that these are co-ordinated to meet the needs of the individual children and their families.

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An additional threshold of need has been added – known as Universal Plus. Please see enclosed document regarding the threshold of needs.

The Early Help Assessment and Plan (formally known as Single Assessment and Plan) replaces other previous forms such as CAF and is used to span the entire journey, growing with the child and is based on the signs of safety model. The form can be used to ensure all the information is passed on and to help the family / child receive the support and help they need. The form is completed with the family, submitted and then a co-ordinated package of support, advice and guidance is put in place. Families are allocated at weekly meetings which means that there is effective communication and information sharing, the agencies involved in the meetings also agree and hold collective responsibility for decision making on step-ups and steps downs.

Please see following paperwork for further information.

Contact details: Duty team 01472 326292

[FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk)

Families First Access Point is a multi agency team that acts as the first point of contact for parents, the community, professionals and other agencies when we have a worry or concern about a child or family – where the child is not at significant risk of harm. The team provides information , advice and guidance, is staffed by multi agency professionals.

### **Technology and Social Networking**

In order to ensure that all children attending Precious Times are safeguarded and protected during their time with us we ensure that there is no opportunity for photo's to be taken or used in unsuitable ways or for confidentiality to be breached.

For this reason we stipulate that personal cameras, mobile phones and any devices capable of taking images are not allowed within the rooms or to be used when on trips. The only exception to this would be during a special event such as Christmas Play, in these circumstances if a video camera / camera is used by a staff member the memory card should be cleared immediately after and transferred to the computer at Precious Times, then checked by a Manager / Director. Permission for this to happen must first be sought from a Manager or the Director.

### **Mobile Phones and Wearable Technology**

We believe our staff and students should be completely attentive to the children during their hours of work to ensure all children in the setting receive high quality care and education. This is why mobile phones are not to be used during working hours.

- Mobile phones can only be used on a designated break and then this must be away from the children
- Any wearable technology such as Apple watches, smart watches or activity trackers should never be used to take calls or used as an excuse to check your phone during your working hours.
- Apple watches or similar devices that have a camera should never be worn within the rooms. They should always be stored in your locker.
- Mobile phones should be stored safely in staff lockers at all times during the hours of your working day
- During outings, staff will use mobile phones belonging to the nursery wherever possible. No photographs should be taken of the children on any phones, either personal or those owned by the setting
- The mobile phone kept within the room is for emergency use only (in an event of a fire)

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- Parents and visitors are not to use mobile phones within the rooms.
- Mobile phones are not to be used by parents during parties or plays to take photographs. Parents will be reminded of this before these kinds of events.

### Cameras/IPods

We understand how important photographs are in tracking children's development so the setting has cameras/ IPods available for staff to use for observations and displays.

No personal cameras of any kind are to be used within the setting with the only exception of the circumstances mentioned above.

No cameras of any kind to be taken into bathrooms (cubicles) while in the setting or on trips (photos can be taken of children washing and drying hands for timeline purposes)

Personal cameras of any kind are not to be used by parents during parties or plays to take photographs unless otherwise stated by the settings management.

### Social Networking

We also feel that restrictions need to be placed on staff when they access social networking sites. The nursery has a high reputation to upkeep and comments made on sites such as 'Facebook' could have an impact on how parents using the nursery view the staff.

- Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites such as 'Facebook' that could be construed to have any impact on the nursery's reputation
- Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites that would offend any other member of staff or parent using the nursery
- Staff **MUST NOT** add parents to their page on social networking sites\* (please see below for exceptions)
- Permission is sought from families if they are happy for photographs of their child to go on the internet.

If any of the above points are not followed or if any member of staff is found to be in possession of or suspected of using their mobile phone / personal camera of any kind / recording device during a session / within the setting where any children are present they **will** face disciplinary action / instant dismissal. The company reserves the right to conduct search of personal belongings if there is a suspected incident reported to them.

**\*There are exceptions to this rule at the discretion of the management.**

- **if a staff member knew the parents and were already friends on face book before they started to work at Precious Times or before the family started to use the setting**
- **if the parent is a relation of the staff member**
- **if a staff member becomes a parent at the setting**

However please remember that they are a parent at the setting and you are a staff member so you still must adhere to the confidentiality pledge. Should there become any issues and there is a risk of the name of the business being brought into disrepute then the staff member will be required to delete the person in question and disciplinary action will be taken.

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### Online Safety

We endeavour to support safe online practices to our families, we include online safety tips as part of registration packs and have a display in the hallway which also gives tips of online safety for parents and children.

Children are also educated around this to ensure they keep themselves safe from bullying, radicalisation or abuse.

We ensure 'harmful online material' is not access by any children attending the setting the ipod's and any equipment used which can access the internet have strict filters and are closely monitored.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is when a young person is used by being made or tricked into doing something sexual, sometimes receiving something in return like love, affection, gifts, money, drugs or alcohol. We follow North East Lincolnshire Council LSCB procedures found on <http://www.safernel.co.uk/>

### Child Criminal Exploitation / Cuckooing

A young person's involvement in county lines activity often leaves signs. A young person might exhibit some of these signs, either as a member or as an associate of a gang dealing drugs. Any sudden changes in a young person's lifestyle should be discussed with them. Some indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Cuckooing is a tactic typically used by drug gangs seeking to expand their operations beyond the reaches of their home turf. It involves taking over the homes of vulnerable people, such as drug users, people with mental health issues or drink problems and sex workers – forcing them to let someone live with them and effectively taking over their home to use as a base of operations for drug dealing and other crimes.

We follow North East Lincolnshire Council LSCB procedures found on <http://www.safernel.co.uk/>

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### Prevent Duty

We understand that as childcare providers we have a responsibility to keep children safe, promote their welfare and provide early intervention to individuals at risk of radicalisation -

*Radicalization (or radicalisation) is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that (1) reject or undermine the status quo or (2) reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice*

We recognise that we have a 'due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism' in line with section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

We must meet specific legal duties around being able to identify children who could be vulnerable to radicalisation and what to do if they are identified. This now comes under the banner of our 'safeguarding' duties and so is part of our policy.

We are committed to providing a secure environment where our children feel safe and are kept safe. Staff within the setting understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all undertake PREVENT training and have access to information around this.

The UK's counter terrorism strategy is called CONTEST. This aims to reduce the risk to the UK, this has 4 areas of work:

PREVENT  
PURSUE  
PROTECT  
PREPARE

Three key objectives of the 'PREVENT' duty are:

Ideology - challenging the ideology of terrorism and disrupt the ability of those who promote it

Individuals - prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support

institutions - work with education, health, faith etc sectors where there are risks of radicalisation which need to be addressed.

In order for these to be addressed a multi-agency approach should be used, this is called CHANNEL.

As a company and staff team we ensure the following:

- Staff are trained and informed of the responsibility and feel confident that if required they would know what to.
- Staff are able to identify children who could be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do if they are identified
- Staff build effective partnerships and relationships with families – this is very important as they are then in a key position to be able to spot signs of radicalisation.
- Monitor our social media presence and use of devices with internet access within the setting to monitor online risks to children and families

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- We assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism and work in partnership with local partners such as the police, Prevent Co-ordinators, Channel Police Practitioners and our local LSCB to take account of local risks and respond appropriately and when necessary
- Action is taken / referrals are made where behaviour causing concern is observed or where there are concerns that an individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation
- Focus on children's PSED, ensuring children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value others views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes
- Support, assist and advise families who raise concerns with us and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms.
- We work in partnership with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, taking and following advice as and when required

We understand that there is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, we need to be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate they may be in need of some help or protection. These children may display different signs or may seek to hide their views. We recognise that it's up to us to use our professional judgement, be aware and to communicate with each other.

Examples of issues we are alert to are:

- Disclosures by children of their exposure to extremist actions or viewing related materials of others
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendships or actions
- Use of extremist or 'hate terms' to exclude others or to incite violence
- Intolerance of differences between themselves and their peers / the intolerance of their families to other families

### **Action**

Any concerns will be recorded and referred into our local CHANNEL unit by emailing [prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk) or ringing 01482 220750 Mobile 07464983637.

Any immediate and urgent concerns about any suspicious behaviour relating to terrorism should be reported immediately to the Police on 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)

Full notes will be kept and filed and further instruction from the relevant agency followed, we will work alongside CHANNEL and LSCB.

### **Promoting resilience**

Children's resilience to radicalisation can be built up through the promotion of British or shared values and embedding them into our practice.

These are not unique to Britain, they are universal aspirations for equality - they help children become compassionate and considerate. We need to demonstrate and embed these values in our everyday practice through the EYFS with particular regard to Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World.

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These values are defined as:

- **Democracy**
  - Encourage children to express their views, helping them understand that their views count
  - Support them to listen to and value each other's views
  - Support them to express their feelings and ask for help when needed
  - Where appropriate demonstrate democracy during their play - show of hands to decide something
  - Turn taking and sharing activities
  - Asking questions and being inquisitive
  - Provide children with choices; support them to know that they can choose
- **The rule of law**
  - Gaining understanding of their behaviour and its consequences
  - Gain an understanding of right and wrong
  - Work with the children to develop rules for use of equipment / resources
  - Routine within the setting should be in place and apply to everyone
- **Individual liberty**
  - Developing a positive sense of themselves
  - Activities to raise self-esteem and increase confidence in their abilities
  - Develop use of language to do with feelings
  - Encourage discussions where children share their experiences and others listen
  - The children should be able to give their opinion and know its ok to do so
- **Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**
  - An environment and ethos of inclusion and tolerance
  - Knowledge and appreciation of other cultures, know about similarities and differences between themselves and other families, faiths, cultures. Share and discuss celebrations and experiences.
  - Sharing their own and respecting others' opinions
  - Stories that reflect and value diversity
  - Providing resources which challenge gender / cultural stereotyping
  - Being part of the wider community

The above are things which we do throughout of everyday routines, to meet the PREVENT duty we plan to continue to support children to be confident and respectful with an awareness of others which in turn supports them to become adults who are less likely to become involved in extremism.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is illegal in the UK it is a form of child abuse, causing severe pain long lasting harmful consequences. We understand our duty to have knowledge and make appropriate referrals as and when required. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is further information following this policy and the NSPCC contact details are listed below.

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FGM refers to procedures of any alteration involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs. The procedure may lead to short term and long-lasting harmful consequences such as death, trauma, infections, flashbacks, infertility, kidney problems, sexual dysfunctions, incontinence, post-traumatic stress disorder etc. It is known to be practised in the North African countries, the Middle-East, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. However, with migration worldwide it is also practised in the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia etc.

The United Nations addresses FGM as violation of human rights. In the UK, FGM is a criminal offence and a harmful form of child abuse. It is illegal to practice in the UK and/or anyone involved in taking girl outside of the UK to have FGM carried out will be punished under the FGM Act 2003 and Serious Crime Act 2015. FGM is not a religious practice.

### **Indicators**

There are a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM.

FGM often takes place in the summer holidays, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Professionals should be mindful of high risk times when children go on long holidays and/or are getting a visit by female elder from their country of origin. Additionally, girls are considered at risk where their mother or sisters have undergone FGM, and girls are talking about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman.'

Post FGM symptoms can include, but are not limited to:

- Difficulty in walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending long periods of time in the bathroom/toilet.
- Displaying unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence.
- Parents/carers reluctant to explain reasons for absence.
- Talking about themselves in the third person or talking about a "friends" problem.

### **Mandatory Reporting Duty**

Section 5C of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 75 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) gave the Government powers to issue statutory guidance on FGM to relevant persons.

The guidance provides professionals with the information needed to help us understand the issues around FGM;

- Professionals' responsibilities on FGM are linked to wider safeguarding duties and good practice; the range of legal interventions to deal with FGM
- Guidelines for key professionals including police, healthcare professionals, children's social care and schools and colleges
- Working with communities to prevent FGM.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (appendix 1) (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It is more likely that discoveries

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of this would be done through disclosure but with the nature of personal care that is conducted on children ie nappy changing and supporting potty training it is possible we may notice it. These cases must be referred to police and we understand our duty to do this.

**Immediate reporting is required if FGM has been performed recently, and in historical cases, reporting must take place within one month.**

**As a setting, we will aim to raise awareness of FGM by:**

- Ensuring staff have an awareness of this and training is accessed by all staff which gives confidence when dealing with this.
- Having access to NSPCC helpline numbers to be able to offer support to victims

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

The UK's Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) have outlined the following reasons why people coerce others into matrimony:

- To control unwanted behaviour and sexuality, and prevent 'unsuitable' relationships, i.e. with people outside their ethnic, cultural, caste or religious group
- To protect perceived cultural or religious ideals
- Family 'honour' or long-standing family commitments
- Peer group or family pressure
- To ensure land, property and wealth remain in the family
- To strengthen family links
- To assist claims for residence and citizenship
- To provide a carer for a disabled family member / reduce the 'stigma' of disability

Forced marriage is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

We follow North East Lincolnshire Council LSCB procedures found on <http://www.safernel.co.uk/>

### **Breast Ironing:**

Breast Ironing also known as "Breast Flattening" is the process whereby young pubescent girls breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed

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that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education.

Much like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Breast Ironing is a harmful cultural practice and is child abuse. Professionals working with children and young people must be able to identify the signs and symptoms of girls who are at risk of or have undergone breast ironing. Similarly to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), breast ironing is classified as physical abuse therefore professionals must follow their Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures.

The United Nations (UN) states that Breast Ironing affects 3.8 million women around the world and has been identified as one of the five under-reported crimes relating to gender-based violence (<http://www.unwomenuk.org/breast-ironing-must-be-stopped/>). The custom uses large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over scorching coals to compress the breast tissue of girls as young as 9 years old. Those who derive from richer families may opt to use an elastic belt to press the breasts which prevents them from growing.

The mutilation is a traditional practice from Cameroon designed to make teenage girls look less "womanly" and to deter unwanted male attention, pregnancy and rape. The practice is commonly performed by family members, 58% of the time by the mother. In many cases the abuser thinks they are doing something good for their daughter, by delaying the effects of puberty so that she can continue her education, rather than getting married.

There is no specific law within the UK around Breast Ironing, however it is a form of physical abuse and if professionals are concerned a child may be at risk of or suffering significant harm they must refer to their Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures.

The girl generally believes that the practice is being carried out for her own good and she will often remain silent. Young pubescent girls usually aged between 9 – 15 years old and from practising communities are most at risk of breast ironing. Breast ironing is a well-kept secret between the young girl and her mother. Often the father remains completely unaware.

Some indicators that a girl has undergone breast ironing are as follows:

- Unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college including depression, anxiety, aggression, withdrawn etc;
- Reluctance in undergoing normal medical examinations;
- Some girls may ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear;
- Fear of changing for physical activities due to scars showing or bandages being visible.

Breast ironing is practiced in all ten regions of Cameroon and has been reported in Benin, Ivory Coast, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Togo, Zimbabwe and Guinea-Conakry. There are concerns that African immigrants have brought Breast Ironing practice with them to the UK.

Due to the instruments which are used during the process of breast ironing, for example, spoon/broom, stones, pestle, breast band, leaves etc. combined with insufficient aftercare, young girls are exposed to significant health risks. Breast ironing is painful and violates a young girl's physical integrity. It exposes girls to numerous health problems such as cancer, abscesses,

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itching, discharge of milk, infection, dissymmetry of the breasts, cysts, breast infections, severe fever, tissue damage and even the complete disappearance of one or both breasts.

This form of mutilation not only has negative health consequences for the girls, but often proves futile when it comes to deterring teenage sexual activity. The practice not only seriously damages a child's physical integrity, but also their social and psychological well-being.

The practice is carried out under the misguided intention to "protect" women and girls from men's sexual harassment. These violent acts are not only perpetrated by men on women, but by older generations of women on young girls. In practicing communities, it is believed many boys and men believe girls whose breasts have grown are ready to have sex, therefore elders (mothers, grandmothers, aunties etc.) believe that by suppressing a girl's development of her breast she will be protected from rape, kidnapping, sexual harassment and early forced marriage.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

We follow North East Lincolnshire Council LSCB procedures found on <http://www.safernel.co.uk/>

**It is important that all staff are aware of this and follow the usual LSCB procedures if they suspect that this abuse has occurred.**

### **Procedures:**

#### **Allegations against a Member of Staff / or Volunteer**

In the event of an allegation being received against a member of staff or volunteer we follow the most up to date procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) [www.safernel.co.uk](http://www.safernel.co.uk)

Where a child / Parent or other staff member makes an allegation against a member of staff / volunteer we will:

- Ensure all information is fully recorded, including full details of the allegation.
- Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – contact details page 18) at the LSCB, full details given and advice taken from them regarding the allegation and what to do next.
- Take and follow advice given and brief feedback given to the person making the allegation (if appropriate)
- If advised a full investigation should be undertaken by the company to establish the facts of the case, all this will be fully recorded. Any investigation will be undertaken fairly and

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applied equally to all staff. There may be need to suspend the staff member in question (on full pay)

- The LADO should be kept informed throughout the investigation and any advice taken.
- The investigation will conclude and give indication as to what should be done next ie disciplinary for the staff member, training, dismissal.
- The disciplinary procedure should be followed and both parties informed of the outcome.
- At every stage, the member of staff concerned should be advised of the nature of the complaint and any action being taken. They should also be given an explanation for any penalty imposed.
- Staff will not be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct (see disciplinary policy)
- Staff will be given the opportunity to state their case, and be accompanied by a colleague or Trade Union representative of their choice, during any part of the disciplinary process.
- Staff have a right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against them.
- Investigations will be conducted by either the Manager or company Director or an independent party.
- We understand there may be instances where this may become a Police matter, in which case the investigation would be left to them once all information had been relayed.
- While the alleged incident of gross misconduct is being investigated, the individual concerned is likely to be suspended, during which time normal pay levels will prevail. Such suspension is not to be regarded as a form of disciplinary action and will be for as short a period as possible. Any decision to dismiss will be taken only after a full investigation.

More information about this can be found in our Discipline / Grievance Policy.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from Precious Times Childcare Services or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with our responsibilities under the Vulnerable groups Act 2006. Ofsted will also be informed.

### **Responding to Suspicions of Abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect this includes causes of suspected Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), breast ironing and radicalisation.
- Our named persons who co-ordinate child protection / safeguarding issues – Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) are Kerry Whitney, Cheryl Osborne, Helen Jackson, Vicki Mckay, Linda Arnold and Kerry Francis.
- There is always a DSO available either in person or over the telephone to give advice and support in the event of a situation arising.
- Parents are approached in the first instance regarding any suspicions unless it is felt children could be in immediate danger
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, the setting keeps records and investigates.

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- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children. Just the facts are recorded.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals.

**MASH and FFAP are now jointly known as the Families First Access Point (FFAP)**

**Any concerns regarding a child or family should be directed to the FFAP. This team is made up of Early Help Practitioners and Social works to ensure that children and families are receiving the most appropriate support at the right time ensuring the most appropriate response to a child's individual needs.**

**If the child is at immediate risk the Police should be called.**

**Where a referral is made to FFAP the refer will always ask the question "so what are you going to do with the information that I have told you" this is always followed up by the DSO to remain up to date.**

**More information and the appropriate forms are behind this policy.**

**Advice and next steps from the team are then followed, with all actions recorded and retained.**

### **Disclosures**

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child that its good they have talked about what has happened
- listens to the child
- gives no promises about being able to keep it a secret
- does not question the child
- make a record of what was said using the child's words

This information is filed confidentially and used to complete the referral forms if required.

### **Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures**

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- The age of the child;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- 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.

This record is made on the Safeguarding Concern form and stored confidentially, the information can then be used to complete the relevant referral forms if required.

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All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting. Staff members are made fully aware that if they are unhappy with the reporting systems and what is done by the DSO with regards to a Safeguarding issue they are able to voice their concerns, this is included within our Whistle blowing policy.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse / Bullying**

Staff recognise that children and young people are capable of abusing their peers. This is taken very seriously as we understand the emotional impact it can have on the children. Our Behaviour Management policy provides children with consistency and supports them to understand how to treat each other with respect as well as outlining how issues dealt with within the setting.

We hold a discrimination log to ensure that any discriminatory behaviours are recognised so they can be monitored and challenged.

Please also see our Behaviour Management Policy.

### **Missing Children**

We have a clear policy and procedure in place in the event of a child going missing to ensure that well-co-ordinated responses reduce the harm to them or the risk of harm, please see this for further information.

### **Local Residents**

Our setting operates from a residential area and we recognise that there is a risk of safeguarding concerns about local residents or passers-by as well as disclosures being made by them to us.

We have a good relationship with the local residents and like to keep them informed as to what the setting is doing.

We have a risk assessment in place to keep children safe from possible safeguarding incidents involving local residents. Access to the building is limited to staff and families using the Nursery, any visitors are signed in and always accompanied. The entrances are secure with fob / key pad systems in place, the perimeters of the building are also secure to ensure that unauthorised people are not able to enter. Please see the written risk assessment for further details.

Concerns about or from a member of the public would always be dealt with seriously and with efficiency.

- Full details should be noted down including dates, times, places, names and the nature of the concerns on the safeguarding concern form.
- Parents (if appropriate) would normally be contacted
- As with all suspicions of abuse or disclosures FFAP would be contacted for advice and a referral if necessary.
- The appropriate referral form would then be completed and sent through.
- A record would then be kept in our safeguarding file for future reference.

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### **Informing Parents**

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

In extreme cases we may use physical intervention to ensure safety of staff, children and visitors. This will be recorded and shared with parents to ensure they are fully informed. For further information please refer to our Behaviour Management Policy.

### **Complaints**

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the LSCB when investigating any complaint 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.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. We have a full written Confidentiality Policy and Confidentiality Agreement which staff sign up to. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

### **Support to Families and Staff Members**

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.
- We recognise that Safeguarding issues are often very upsetting for staff members involved. They will be supported throughout by the Management team and DSO.

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### Important Contacts:

- Families First Action Point    01472 326292    [FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk)
- MASH - [ChS-MASHVikingHouse@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ChS-MASHVikingHouse@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk)
- Local Safeguarding Children Board    01472 325499
- LADO – 01472 326118 [ChildrensSafeguardingandReviewingService@Nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ChildrensSafeguardingandReviewingService@Nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk)
- Police – non emergency 101
- Police – emergencies 999
- NSPCC FGM helpline – 0800 028 3550    [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)
- Early Help Duty team - 01472 326292    [FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:FFAP@nelincs.gcsx.gov.uk)
- PREVENT DUTY - [prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@humberside.pnn.police.uk) 01482 220750 07464983637

# PRECIOUS TIMES CHILDCARE SERVICES POLICIES

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**This Policy was adopted at a meeting of Managers and Directors**

**24 February 2014**

Mrs Kerry L Francis

Miss Kerry L Whitney

Mrs Helen Jackson

Policy Revised Date	Revised By
<b>9 February 2015</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Vicki McKay
<b>8 June 2015</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Vicki McKay
<b>17 February 2016</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Vicki McKay
<b>15 November 2016</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Vicki McKay
<b>23 January 2017</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson Miss Vicki McKay
<b>24 April 2018</b>	Mrs Kerry L Francis Miss Kerry L Whitney Mrs Helen Jackson