



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

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*Approved by: Damon Nemish, Director (February 2021)*

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### Statement of Intent

The safety and well-being of all our students at The First Steps International Pre-School (The First Steps) is our highest priority. Our aim is to provide a secure and caring environment so that every child can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by staff and children so that every child can develop his/her full potential and feel positive about themselves. All children should care for and support each other. This policy is applicable to all children. Failure to adhere to the contents of this policy may lead to the implementation of disciplinary procedures for staff.

### Child Protection and Safeguarding

This policy makes the distinction between: Child Protection – steps that need to be taken when a child is in, or suspected to be in imminent danger of suffering significant harm, abuse or neglect; and Safeguarding – a broader term and an extension to Child Protection which includes preventative steps taken to keep children safe from harm.

### What is child abuse?

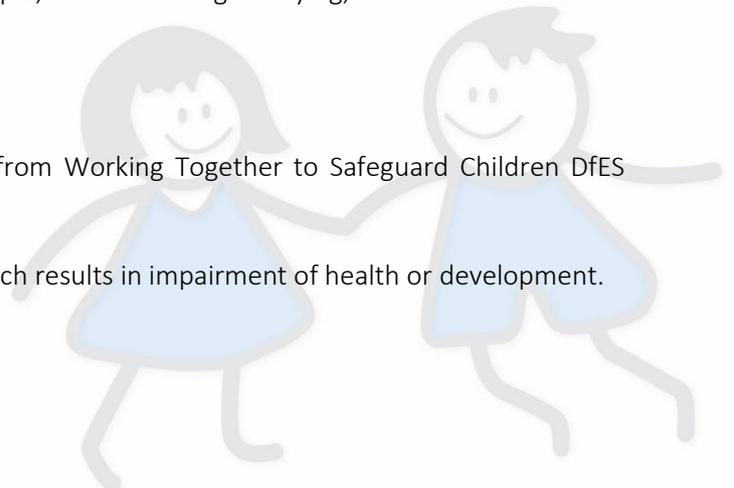
The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in the UK defines child abuse as:

“the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18. Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse.”

Abuse can also be caused by siblings or other young people, such as through bullying, and should be treated the same as abuse by adults.

Definitions of Abuse and Indicators Definitions: (taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006).

a) Neglect - the persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in impairment of health or development.



- b) Physical Abuse – actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- c) Sexual – actual or likely exploitation of a child by involvement in sexual activities without informed consent or understanding, or that violate social taboos or family roles.
- d) Emotional – actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment, inappropriacy, or rejection.

Signs of possible abuse include: (These are not exhaustive or necessarily indicative of abuse).

- a) Neglect – constant hunger or tiredness; frequent lateness or absence, poor personal hygiene, untreated medical problems; running away, stealing, low self-esteem.
- b) Physical - unexplained injuries/bruises; improbable or evasive excuses, untreated injuries; fear of treatment or medical help, fear of physical contact, fear of going home, over aggressive or defensive tendencies, fear of removing clothes, bites, lashes, facial injuries.
- c) Sexual - tendency to cling, tendency to cry, genital itching, acting 'like a baby', distrust of familiar adults, wetting and/or soiling, fear of undressing, throat infections, depression, fearful/panic attacks.
- d) Emotional – physical, emotional, developmental delay; over-reaction to mistakes; tearful, fear of losing, fear of parents being contacted, stealing, thumb-sucking, rocking, anxiety, Munchausen Syndrome by proxy (If a parent of child deliberately fabricates or induces illness in that child). Signs may include; perceived illness, doctor shopping, enforced illness, fabricated illness, poisoning e.g. with salt, induced seizures, suffocation, bleeding, rashes, tampering with vomit/urine. Child may exhibit unusual or unnaturally prolonged illness; symptoms/signs have a temporal association with mother's presence, mother unusually at ease in hospital environment, multiple illnesses/similar symptoms in family, unexplained death of siblings.

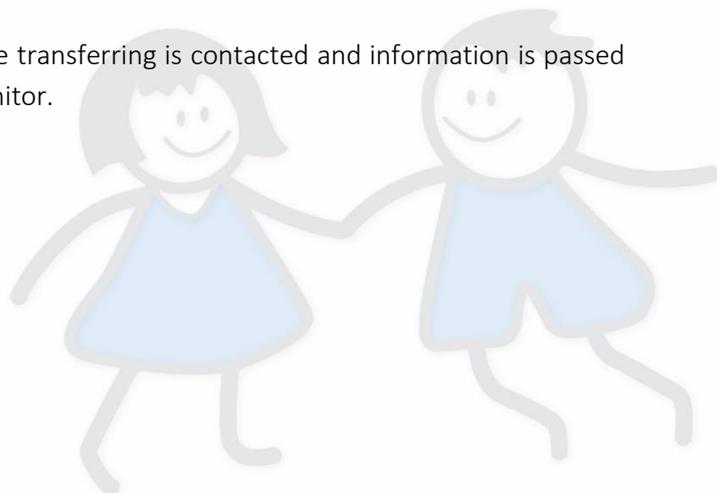
### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

At The First Steps, Mr. Alistair Downs, Head of School, is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The DSL has been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection and inter-Agency working. The DSL reports at least three times a year to the School Director.

The DSL will keep confidential records, referral information and feedback from agencies involved with individual cases. This information is kept secure and separate from other school records. Access is restricted to the DSL.

If a child transfers or leaves, the School to which they are transferring is contacted and information is passed on to the named person to alert them to the need to monitor.



## Induction and Training

All new members of staff receive training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the DSL. Child protection training is also given to School Director. All staff are provided with a copy of the School's "Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure" and "Child Protection Code of Conduct." All staff sign to acknowledge they have received training and received, understood and agreed to the documents.

## Raising Awareness with Children

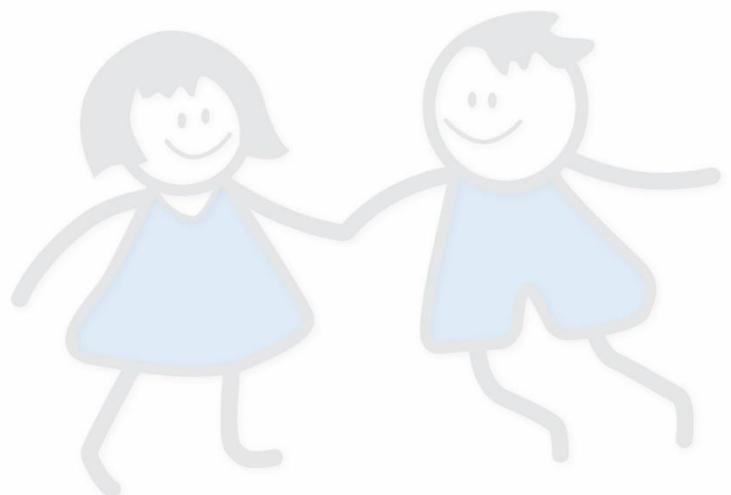
The School prides itself on its culture of open and effective communication between staff and children, and on its excellent pastoral support structures. As appropriate to their age, we prepare all of our children to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions. Time is allocated in PSHE and during class time for discussion in developing in children, the confidence which they require, to recognise abuse and to stay safe. The School will take all possible steps to ensure that children know that there are adults to whom they can turn if they are worried, including all staff.

## Transparency

The School prides itself on its ethos of respect and mutual tolerance. This policy is available on our website, and we hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the School. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always pass all relevant information onto local safeguarding agencies.

## Support Services within Thailand

The Childline Thailand Foundation advocates for child rights issues through all levels of Thai society. Childline provides professional support to children and adults. These services include counselling, referrals, emergency interventions, victim support, rehabilitation and their 24-hour call centre. Childline can be contacted on 1387.



## Child Protection Procedure

### Overview

The formulation and publication of this Child Protection Procedure is based on guidance given in the UK government's document 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (1 January 2007) and subsequent revised guidance.

The First Steps believes that children have the fundamental right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. The First Steps aims to provide a caring environment and a curriculum where self-esteem can be nurtured and children empowered to protect themselves.

The First Steps fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support children in school. There are, therefore, three main elements to the Child Protection Procedure: Prevention, Protection and Support.

### Prevention

For children, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevent the chances of abuse happening. The First Steps will therefore aim to:

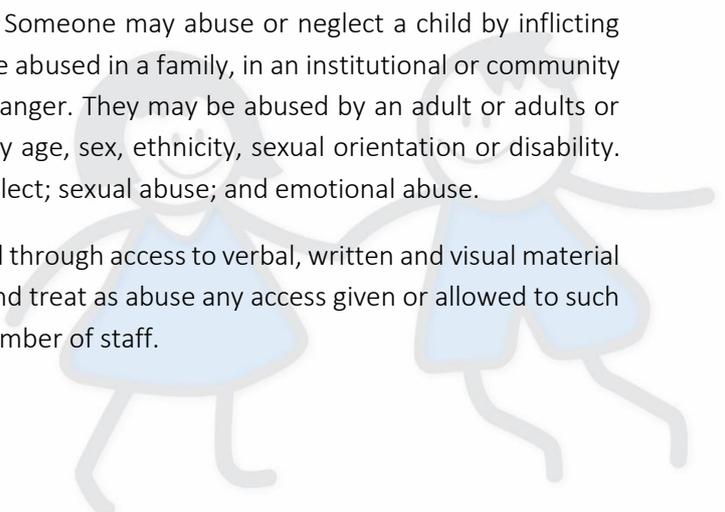
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk; and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in The First Steps whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE, which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- Include in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life and underline their own responsibility not to abuse others.
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

### Protection

Adults in charge of children should know what to do if they suspect that someone is being physically, emotionally, intellectually or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this is happening.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It can happen to children of any age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. There are four defined areas of abuse; physical injury; neglect; sexual abuse; and emotional abuse.

The First Steps also recognises that children can be harmed through access to verbal, written and visual material that is inappropriate to their age. The School will regard and treat as abuse any access given or allowed to such material, especially through the action or inaction of a member of staff.

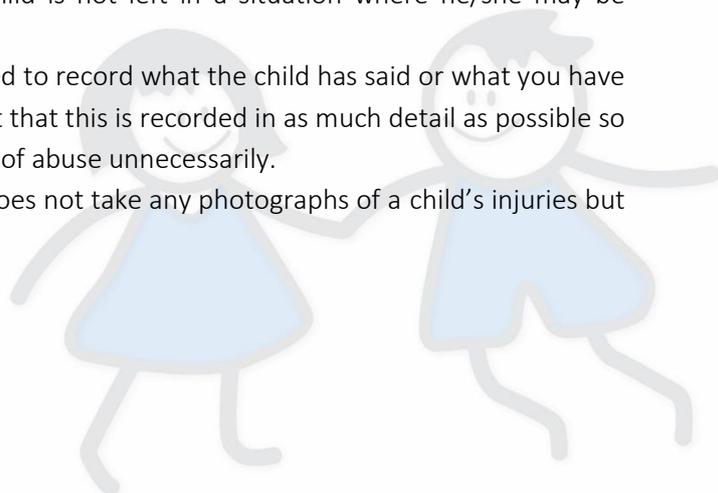


The following points provide a brief guide for action:

- Staff should stop and listen to anyone who wishes to report suspicious incidents or specific abuse.
- Brief notes should be taken of the incident reported, during or immediately after the interview.
- Staff should not undertake to keep what is revealed entirely confidential, since they have a duty to take action if suspected abuse is reported.
- The DSL should be apprised of any suspected abuse situation at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff should then discuss the next steps with the DSL, in particular, plans to protect the child, and a decision should be reached quickly so that the child is not placed at further risk.
- Staff should not attempt to carry out an investigation of the incident(s) reported: this is to be left to the appropriately trained member of staff and local agencies.
- It should not be thought that any given group of children is immune to abuse or that an accusation against a colleague, or known individual is necessarily unfounded.

The following is advice on what to do if a child or young person discloses information:

- Remain calm - do not panic or express shock.
- Listen carefully – do not prompt responses.
- Reassure the child – tell them they are doing the right thing and that you are pleased they are confiding in an adult. Praise them for having the courage to talk about it with someone.
- Do not project or assume anything, let the child tell his/her story; leave your own assumptions out.
- Leading questions should not be asked of children; children should instead be encouraged to provide detailed accounts in their own words.
- Possible questions to ask in a non-leading manner include:
  - What happened to you?
  - Who did this to you?
  - Where did it happen?
  - When did this happen?
- Use age-specific language. Ask for clarification for any meaning or words you do not understand.
- Let the child know they are believed.
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support them.
- Do not promise secrecy to the child. Explain that, in order to help them, you will have to tell certain other parties but it will be as confidential as possible. Assure them that their issue will not be general knowledge within the school community.
- Check that you have a full understanding of what the child has told you before the end of the discussion.
- Make the child comfortable. Ensure that the child is not left in a situation where he/she may be pressured to change their story.
- Report the disclosure to the DSL. You will be asked to record what the child has said or what you have observed, include dates and times. It is important that this is recorded in as much detail as possible so that the child does not have to repeat the details of abuse unnecessarily.
- In line with Safeguarding guidelines, the school does not take any photographs of a child's injuries but instead records them by use of diagrams.



- Maintain confidentiality. Do not discuss this with any other members of staff, children or people outside of school. It will be considered a breach of school protocol if you do this.

## Support

The First Steps recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of boys and girls at risk. Whilst at School, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school. It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

The School will endeavor to support pupils through:

- The curriculum, by encouraging self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The School ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all children and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- The implementation of school rules.
- A considered approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interest to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

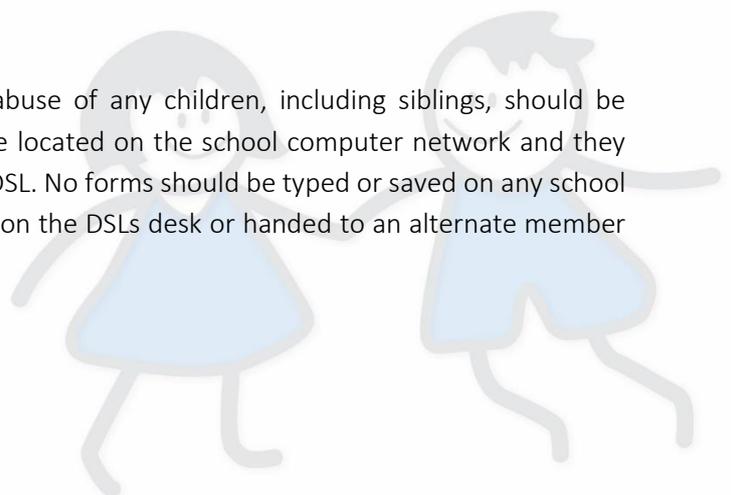
The First Steps will ensure that the DSL will attend training relevant to their role. All school employees have a responsibility to protect students from abuse and the DSL will ensure that employees are conversant with the School's Child Protection Procedures and know how to access them. All staff will receive training and updated information on child protection on an annual basis.

The DSL will seek to promote a culture to enable all staff to discuss any personal concerns or difficulties that may get in the way of protecting children. Members of staff are encouraged to take such concerns privately to the DSL if necessary.

## Procedure

### Reporting Concerns of Abuse

Allegations or concerns about the abuse or potential abuse of any children, including siblings, should be reported to the DSL. All safeguarding form templates are located on the school computer network and they should be **handwritten** and given by hand directly to the DSL. No forms should be typed or saved on any school or personal computer or device. No forms should be left on the DSLs desk or handed to an alternate member of staff.



Where allegations regarding Child Protection are raised concerning a member of staff, either teaching or non-teaching, the DSL should be advised immediately. The DSL will then advise the School Director.

If the allegation concerns the DSL, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the School Director.

### Safer Recruitment

The First Steps takes child protection seriously and will keep child protection issues in mind throughout the recruitment process. The School adheres to the UK Government's statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, (March 2015) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015), which sets out the requirements for safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children.

All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the School, including part-time staff, short term and supply staff and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches are subjected background checks prior to commencing work.

All staff involved in recruitment have completed training in Safer Recruitment. Following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015), there is a safeguarding statement in all adverts. References for shortlisted candidates are collected following interview and written references are verified via telephone.

### Developing Safe Working Practice

Staff have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people. The aim of the following guidance is to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper conduct.

#### General Conduct

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare of children in their care. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their children and the public in general.

#### Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. Staff should be dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake, and inline with The First Steps Dress Code Policy. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.



### Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for children to be strongly attracted to a member of staff. A member of staff, who becomes aware that a child may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this with the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

### Physical Contact

There are occasions where it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and therefore, staff should use their professional judgement at all times. Contact should always be done with the child's agreement.

### Social Contact

Staff should not seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of securing a friendship. Staff should not give their personal details to children unless the need to do so is agreed with the Head of School.

### Physical Intervention

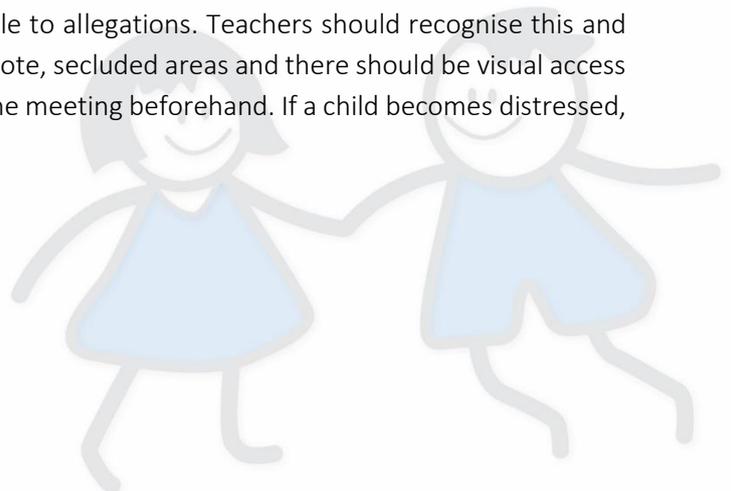
Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a child injuring others or themselves, causing damage to property or engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline. In all cases where physical intervention is used, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

### Sexual Contact

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Staff should avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.

### One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations are more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers should recognise this and plan meetings accordingly. Meetings should not be in remote, secluded areas and there should be visual access and/or an open door. Other staff should be informed of the meeting beforehand. If a child becomes distressed, always report it to the DSL.



## Curriculum

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit nature or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to children's questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances.

## Whistleblowing

This is the mechanism by which staff can voice concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the DSL or Head of School, especially where the welfare of children is at risk.

## Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should know the DSL, be aware of the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and know the process for promptly and clearly recording any incident or concern and referring it to senior management.

## Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras

Staff may only access their mobile phones during working hours when students are not present and staff are not engaged in the process of teaching.

Photographs taken for the purpose of recording a child or group of children participating in activities or celebrating their achievements, is an effective form of recording their progress. However, it is essential that photographs are taken and stored appropriately in order to safeguard the children in our care. Please note:

- Cameras on mobile phones must not be used to take photographs of children.
- Only designated cameras and mobile devices may be used to take images of children within the school setting or on outings.
- Sometimes outside providers may be appointed by the School to take photographs of children for media purposes, for the school website, for marketing, or for school use. All parents must sign a consent form stating whether or not the School has their permission for this.
- The DSL is responsible for checking the list of children where consent is withheld and needs to ensure that images of these children do not appear on the school's website or in the media. Images taken on these cameras must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress.
- Cameras may only be taken into a bathroom if photographic evidence of children washing their hands needs to be recorded, as is sometimes required by EYFS. This activity must be properly supervised by appropriate staff.

