



22. Safeguarding Policy

Statement of intent

The Oak Montessori will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children in our care and to give them the very best start in life. The Oak Montessori fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding pupils. The Designated Senior Lead (DSL) for The Oak Montessori is **Natasha Rawdon-Rego**. The Deputy Designated Lead (DDSL) for The Oak Montessori is **Claudia Sepriano**.

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The key commitments of this policy for safeguarding children:

1. We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.
2. We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in '*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (see below link)
3. We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues through staff training. We are also committed to empowering young children, through our EYFS & British Values teaching to promote their right to be strong, resilient and heard.
4. We wish to see our staff use and make the most of the benefits of modern technology to support children's learning and development, whilst ensuring children are kept safe.

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Aims

Our aims are to meet the key commitments of this Policy by:

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

Primary legislation

The legal framework for this work is:

- The Children Act 1989 - s 47
- The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order

Guidance

- *What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abuse
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Method to meet Key Commitments

- To ensure there is a DSL for the EYFS and that all staff and volunteers know the names of the designated officers and their roles;
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the nature of abuse, and the correct procedures, should concern over a child in our care arise;
- To provide a safe environment for the children to learn and develop;
- To identify children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and at The Oak Montessori;

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- To support children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan;
- To prevent unsuitable people working with children at The Oak Montessori.

The people you should talk to at The Oak Montessori are:



Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Natasha Rawdon-Rego (1st point of contact)
07979684000
natasha@theoakmontessori.com



Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Claudi Sepriano (2nd point of contact)
07459557251
theoakmontessori@gmail.com



Designated Person for Children in Care

Charlotte Wheeler (3rd point of contact)
07901911341
info@theoakmontessori.com

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Designated Senior Lead (Child Protection Officer) - DSL

The DSL for The Oak Montessori is **Natasha Rawdon-Rego**. Natasha has been provided with relevant ongoing inter-agency Safeguarding training (run by the Early Years team at the London Borough of Merton), which is updated every two years. Following further safeguarding training for all staff, a Deputy DSL is **Claudi Sepriano**.

Responsibilities of the DSL alongside the Business Manager

- Arranging training for all staff, alongside the Business Manager, Charlotte Wheeler, and part time staff, every two years and training for all new volunteers and members of staff as part of their induction training;
- Producing and updating The Oak Montessori's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- Keeping all staff and volunteers updated with current procedure through induction training and annual refresher training carried out in staff meetings;
- Providing support and advice for staff and volunteers;
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records;
- Remedying any deficiencies or weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements without delay;
- To report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

Staffing at The Oak Montessori

The Oak Montessori operate safe recruitment procedures. In order to minimise the risk of employing or engaging an individual who poses any risk to the children at The Oak Montessori, the following procedures are followed (please also refer to The Oak Montessori's Staff Recruitment Policy):

- The Oak Montessori apply to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all staff, including the Proprietors and regular volunteers (including parents) to verify their declaration concerning any convictions, cautions or bind overs, which they have incurred. If a disclosure comes back the DSP will assess whether the disclosure will affect the role the applicant has applied for.
- Staff identity is checked by seeing the applicant's passport, or if unavailable, other photographic identification;
- References are always taken up and are always obtained directly from the referee. Two written references are followed up, one of which includes the last employer. The referee is asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children and to give any details of disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to;

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- Assurances are obtained from external organisations that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on any staff working with the nursery's pupils on a site other than the school;
- Adequate supervision at all times within the nursery;
- Constant supervision of the children when outside the nursery or on trips;
- Supervision of children is by DBS checked members of staff. Any parental volunteers will undergo DBS checks where appropriate and contract workers are never left unsupervised with the children. DBS checks are obtained for any adult who could potentially have unsupervised access to the children throughout the school day;
- a staff induction, which includes information and training on safeguarding;
- weekly meetings among staff are held.

The Prevent Duty

The Oak Montessori is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. From 1st July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty and to ensure that we adhere to and achieve the Prevent duty we will;

- Provide appropriate training for staff within their induction process. Part of this training will enable staff to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation
- We will build the children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views (for early years providers the statutory framework for the EYFS sets standards for learning, development and care for children from 0-5, thereby assisting their personal, social and emotional development and understanding of the world)
- We will assess the risk, by means of a formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology
- We will ensure that our staff understands the risks so that they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
- We are aware of the online risk of radicalisation through the use of social media and the internet
- As with managing other safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection (children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views). The Key Person approach means we already know our key children well and so we endeavour and aim to notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly

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- We will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but we will take action when we observe behaviour of concern. The key person approach means that we already have a rapport with our families so we will notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly
- We will work in partnership with our LSCB & Mash Team for guidance and support
- We will build up an effective engagement with parents/carers and families. (This is important as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation)
- We will assist and advise families who raise concerns with us. It is important to assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms
- We will ensure that our staff will undertake Prevent awareness training so that they can offer advice and support to other members of staff
- We will ensure that any resources used in the nursery are age appropriate for the children in our care and that our staff have the knowledge and confidence to use the resources effectively

Staff Responsibilities

- All practitioners must be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology, but staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, including even very young children, which could indicate they may be in need of help or protection.
- These behaviours can be evident during circle time, Role play activities and quiet times. Quiet times is a good time for children to make disclosures as this is the period that children are closest to their key persons.
- People from all walks of life can be drawn into radicalisation and not necessarily from a particular religion or ethnicity. Terrorism is not promoted by any religion.

The Prevent duty does not require childcare providers to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but we are required to take action when observe behaviour of concern. People dress codes like hijabs, nikabs, abayas and jilbabs are not indicative factors that they are at risk of being radicalised.

What to do if you suspect that children are at the risk of radicalisation

- Follow the setting normal Safeguarding Procedures including discussing with the nursery DSL, and where deemed necessary, with children's social care. In Prevent priority areas, the local authority will have a Prevent Lead who can also provide support.

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- The DSL can also contact the local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number). They will then talk in confidence about the concerns and help to access support and advice.

Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

- **What is abuse and neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or 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.

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- **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. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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- **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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is not an acceptable practice and is a form of child abuse under UK law.

Responding to Suspicions and Evidence of Child Abuse

Once a part of The Oak Montessori, members of staff have an important role, which includes: daily contact with the children, observing the children's work, drawings, watching them play and noticing changes in their behaviour. Through conversation alone the child may disclose information to someone at school they trust. This may be a teacher or volunteer, and therefore all staff and volunteers need to be aware of the appropriate action, should any indications become apparent.

Staff and volunteers must be careful to take note of anything which may give cause for concern, irrespective of how trivial it may seem at the time. Note keeping enables The Oak Montessori to build up a rounded picture and a context within which to assess anything that concerns us about the particular child. Note taking should take into account the date, time, place, people present and what was said and should be given to the DSL or DDSL immediately. If a child arrives at the setting with an existing injury this is discussed with the parents and all staff are informed. The existing injury is recorded on the existing injury form and these are then kept in the child's file. Pre-existing injury forms are regularly reviewed to identify any emerging patterns or concerns.



Following up on an Allegation

- The DSL will assess the situation and decide whether the information needs to be shared with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies e.g. Merton's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Police. This will occur where the DSL considers a child is being abused or at significant risk of being abused; or in need of enhanced preventative services;
- The DSL will lead the processing of referring a child to MASH within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.
- A referral will be followed up in writing within 48 hours, using a Common and Shared Assessment (CASA) form with the appropriate cover sheet. Where possible, concerns will be discussed with the parents and agreement sought for a referral to MASH, unless this may place the child at harm. If the parents are not informed, the DSL will record reasons for this. MASH may also be consulted for advice without naming the child.
- MASH will then decide whether the child is in need or at risk of significant harm within one day. If a child is viewed to be at risk of significant harm an initial assessment will be carried out by MASH within 7 working days. Core assessments should be completed within a maximum of 35 days. Investigations may be single agency and carried out by MASH or joint, which means they are also carried out in conjunction with the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT).

Urgent Referrals

These should be made if anyone suspects actual physical injury, disclosure of abuse, or clear evidence of neglect. It is vital that members of staff do not seek to take on the role of investigators and that the school's procedures are followed strictly.

Allegations against The Oak Montessori members of Staff and volunteers

(on premises or elsewhere)

- We ensure that all parents know how to make a complaint about staff or volunteer action within The Oak Montessori, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Merton Safeguarding Children's Board and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

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- We seek guidance from the LADO on whether the member of staff should be suspended for the duration of the investigation.
- We will notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse while a child is in our care.

LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer

Any allegation or disclosure involving someone who works with children in a paid or voluntary capacity must be reported directly to DSL and Nursery Manager, Natasha Rawdon-Rego, or to the LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer. Please also inform the Charlotte Wheeler asap if you make a report directly to the LADO (unless your concerns relate to the above).

Action:

- The DSL (or owner) will contact the following within **4 hours** of the allegation being made (Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5pm):
 - **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** 020 8545 3179 or LADO@merton.gov.uk (within 4 hours of the allegation being made).
 - In their absence call:- the **Merton's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** team 020 8545 4226 /4227 (9am – 5pm); 020 8770 5000
 - (out of hours) Email: mash@merton.gov.uk /Address: MASH Team 12th Floor, Merton Civic Centre London Road, Morden SM4 5DX
 - **London Borough of Merton Early Years Team:** 020 8545 3140 (within 4 hours of the allegation being made) and follow this up with an email to providers@merton.gov.uk (marked confidential and urgent);
 - **Ofsted:** 0300 123 1231 / 08456 404040 (as soon as possible and within 14 days of the allegation being made). The registered person **MUST** make the referral to Ofsted to comply with the statutory framework. They will assess whether the allegation reaches the threshold for referral to Police / Children's Social Services and advise accordingly regarding further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.
- The Oak Montessori DSL will not investigate the allegation, however will record any information and follow instructions as directed by Merton Early Years or the LADO;
- Where a referral is made because the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm or the alleged abuse is a criminal offence the appropriate procedure will be followed. We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by MASH in conjunction with the police. MASH will decide whether to authorise a child protection enquiry. MASH will liaise with CAIT;

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- After liaison with MASH, a strategy meeting is usually held, which the DSL will attend. This meeting would decide whether it's a Child Protection issue or a practice issue, and in discussion with the DSL a decision would be made whether the teacher / childcare practitioner needed to be suspended.
- Details of the local National Society for The Preservation of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) contacts are also kept. Please see attached documents for contact details.

Safeguarding Staff Training

All staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures with a minimum of Level 2 Safeguarding. This training is updated regularly and takes place during Staff INSET days and staff meetings. This enables staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. These may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour;
- Deterioration in children's general well-being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- Children's comments which give cause for concern;
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting eg. in the child's home; and/or inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. Eg. inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

Mobile phones & cameras

- The Oak Montessori have a strict policy regarding the use of mobile phones and cameras which has been formulated with the absolute objective to safeguard children. The policy applies to staff members, parents and other visitors to the setting.
- Staff must keep their own personal phones and cameras in the staff storage cupboard for the duration of their working day. Only phones and cameras provided to staff by The Oak Montessori can be used.
- Parents and visitors to the site will be asked to lock their personal phones in the lockbox/bag when on The Oak Montessori premises.
- The only photographs taken of children will be with The Oak Montessori equipment and with the express written consent of the child's parent or carer.

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Who To Call:

1. Urgent referrals relating to Child Protection

If you believe that urgent action is needed because, for example, a child is in immediate danger or needs accommodation (Upper Level 3 of the Merton Wellbeing Model), phone the MASH team on 0208545 4226 / 020 8545 4227 (Out of hours: 020 8770 5000) and give as much information as you can.

Your information will be passed immediately to the manager who will make a decision on the risk level and acknowledge this with you within one hour. You must follow up your telephone call by sending a completed Child Protection Referral form to the MASH within 24 hours.

The Child Protection Referral form is available for download or printing at www.merton.gov.uk/casa

2. Non-immediate Child Protection Concerns

If you have a Child Protection concern without urgent or immediate action needed (Lower Level 3 of the Merton Wellbeing Model), you must complete a Child Protection Referral form in as much detail as possible and send it to the MASH at mash@merton.gov.uk.

The Child Protection Referral form is available for download or printing at www.merton.gov.uk/casa

After making an enquiry, once a fuller picture about the case has been established by MASH, the MASH manager will decide on the most appropriate decision to take. You will be notified in writing as to the outcome of the contact.



REFERENCES AND LINKS

Children Act 1989 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

Children Act 2004 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

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