



FARNBOROUGH

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2026

Revised October 2026

Reviewed against the EYFS statutory framework effective 1 September 2026

Document Control and Policy Framework

Setting details

Footsteps Day Nursery and Pre-School - Farnborough (referred to throughout this handbook as "Footsteps Preschool" or "the setting").

Preschool Manager: Danielle Lapworth

Policy version: October 2026

Planned review date: October 2027, or earlier where legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures, staffing, premises, practice or a significant incident makes an earlier review necessary.

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook brings together the setting's core operational policies and procedures. It is intended to provide staff, volunteers, students, parents and carers with clear, consistent expectations for the safe and effective operation of Footsteps Preschool.

The welfare, safety and best interests of children are central to every policy. Policies must be applied alongside professional judgement, the individual needs of children and current statutory requirements. Where there is any conflict between this handbook and current legislation or statutory guidance, the current legal or statutory requirement takes precedence and the policy must be reviewed without delay.

Core statutory framework

Footsteps Preschool works within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026. The setting also has regard to current safeguarding, health and safety, SEND, data protection, equality, public health and early education funding requirements applicable in England.

All staff are expected to know the policies relevant to their role, follow them consistently and raise promptly any concern that a policy is unclear, outdated or not being followed in practice.

Controlled documents

Some operational documents sit outside this handbook because they require frequent updating. These include individual risk assessments, the fire risk assessment and emergency evacuation plan, accident and incident records, allergy action plans, medication records, staff suitability records, attendance registers, safeguarding records, funding declarations, individual support plans and staff training records. These documents form part of the setting's overall policy framework.

Approval and ownership

Policy owner	Footsteps Preschool
Manager	Danielle Lapworth
Provider/Director approval	_____
Approved / review date	_____

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Page numbers reflect this October 2026 edition. Individual site-specific plans and risk assessments are maintained separately.

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Admissions, Fees and Deposits Policy

Aim

Footsteps Preschool aims to offer places fairly, transparently and inclusively, while ensuring that staffing, space, SEND provision and safeguarding arrangements are appropriate for the children attending.

Admissions

Places are offered subject to availability, the age range for which the setting is registered, staffing and ratio requirements, and the setting's ability to meet each child's needs safely and inclusively. Priority may be given to siblings of children already attending and to other agreed local or setting priorities, provided decisions are lawful, fair and non-discriminatory.

No child will be refused or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic. Where a child has SEND, a medical need, allergy or other additional need, the Manager/SEND Co will work with the family before the start date to identify reasonable adjustments, additional information, specialist advice, funding or risk-management arrangements that may be required. A diagnosis is not required before support can be considered.

Parents/carers complete the setting's registration and consent documentation before a child starts. The setting will obtain the information required by the EYFS, including emergency contacts, persons with parental responsibility, medical information, dietary requirements and any relevant court orders or safeguarding information. This comes with a £50 administration fee.

Waiting list

Where requested sessions are unavailable, families may be offered alternative sessions or placed on a waiting list. The setting will not promise a place until availability has been confirmed in writing.

Settling visits

Before a child starts, settling arrangements will be agreed with the family in line with the Settling-In Policy. These may be adjusted according to the child's needs.

Fees and notice

Private fees are charged in accordance with the setting's current published fee schedule and parent contract. The fee schedule is reviewed separately from this handbook so that rates can be updated without making the policy document inaccurate.

Unless the parent contract states otherwise, Footsteps Preschool requires four weeks' written notice to end a place or reduce booked sessions. Requests to increase sessions will be accommodated where capacity allows.

Fees are normally invoiced monthly in advance. The setting's current arrangements for late payment, late collection, notice, deposits and any interest or administration charges are set out clearly in the parent contract and fee schedule. Families experiencing payment difficulty are encouraged to speak to the Manager as early as possible so that reasonable options can be discussed.

Funded entitlement places

Government-funded early education and childcare hours must be accessible free of charge during the funded hours. Footsteps Preschool will not make a top-up fee, non-refundable registration charge, non-refundable deposit, general business charge or payment for resources necessary to deliver the EYFS a condition of accessing funded hours.

Where the setting offers chargeable extras such as meals, snacks, specific consumables, additional private hours or genuinely optional activities, these will be clearly itemised. Parents must be able to opt out of voluntary extras and will be offered a reasonable alternative that allows the funded entitlement to remain accessible free of charge.

Funding arrangements are subject to current Department for Education guidance and the provider agreement with Hampshire County Council. Parents are responsible for providing accurate eligibility information and reconfirming eligibility where required.

Settling-In Policy

Aim

We want every child to feel safe, welcomed and emotionally secure at Footsteps Preschool. Settling is individual: some children separate quickly, while others need a slower and more gradual transition.

Key person and relationships

The setting operates a key-person approach in line with the EYFS. Staff will observe how the child responds to adults and will support the development of a warm, consistent relationship with a key person. The key person works closely with the family and helps ensure the child's care and learning are responsive to their routines, communication, preferences and needs.

Settling arrangements

Footsteps usually offers a minimum of three settling experiences, with the first providing an opportunity for the parent/carer to stay, share information and explore the environment with the child. Subsequent visits may include short periods of separation and gradually increase in length. This is a flexible starting point rather than a fixed requirement: visits may be reduced, extended or adapted where this is in the child's best interests.

Staff will:

- gather information about the child's routines, comfort strategies, communication, health, dietary needs, SEND and interests;
- greet the child consistently and support them to build secure relationships;
- encourage parents/carers to use clear, calm goodbye routines rather than disappearing without saying goodbye;
- provide comfort in ways that respect the child's individual preferences and boundaries;
- allow children time and space to observe and explore while remaining emotionally available;
- update parents/carers about significant aspects of the child's wellbeing during settling;
- review arrangements with the family where distress remains significant or prolonged.

Where a child does not want physical comfort, staff will remain close, calm and responsive rather than forcing contact. A child will never be left in distress without appropriate observation, reassurance and support.

Parents/carers are welcome to discuss settling at any time. Access to the setting during operating hours remains subject to normal safeguarding and security arrangements; the phrase "open-door policy" does not mean unrestricted entry to rooms where children are being cared for.

Arrivals, Departures and Uncollected Children Policy

Aim

To ensure that every child is safely transferred into and out of the setting, attendance records are accurate and children are released only to authorised and suitable persons.

Arrival

A member of staff will welcome each child and record their arrival time on the daily attendance register. Parents/carers should pass on information relevant to the child's wellbeing, including illness, medication already administered, changes at home, injuries or anything else staff need to know to care for the child safely.

Any pre-existing injury or significant mark should be recorded in accordance with the setting's safeguarding and accident procedures. Where an explanation is unclear, inconsistent, concerning or forms part of a pattern, staff will follow safeguarding procedures rather than relying solely on a pre-existing injury form.

The entrance will be kept secure. Children, parents, visitors and contractors must not admit other people into the setting unless specifically authorised to do so.

Collection

Each child will be signed out promptly when they leave. Children will normally be released only to a person authorised by a person with parental responsibility and known to the setting.

Where a different person is collecting, the parent/carer must provide sufficient information for staff to identify them. The setting may use an agreed password and may request identification. Unless the collector is the child's parent, collectors should normally be aged 18 or over. Any exceptional arrangement involving a younger collector must be agreed in advance with the Manager following a safeguarding risk assessment.

A child will not be released where staff reasonably believe the collector is impaired by alcohol, drugs or another condition that could place the child at risk. Staff will seek an alternative authorised collector. If the situation becomes unsafe or there is an immediate safeguarding risk, the police and/or Children's Services will be contacted.

Court orders and parental responsibility

The setting will act in accordance with verified court orders and legal restrictions. Parents/carers must provide the setting with relevant documentation and notify the Manager of changes. Staff will not attempt to interpret disputed legal arrangements beyond the documentation available; advice will be sought where necessary.

Late or uncollected child

Parents/carers must contact the setting as soon as possible if they expect to be late. The child will remain supervised by at least two suitable adults where possible and will be reassured without being made to feel responsible for the situation.

If a child is not collected, staff will:

- telephone parents/carers and then authorised emergency contacts;
- continue to supervise and reassure the child;
- record attempts to make contact;
- inform the Manager/DSL;
- where no responsible adult can be contacted, seek advice from Hampshire Children's Services and/or police as appropriate, normally after a reasonable period of continued attempts and sooner where safeguarding concerns exist;
- not take the child home or leave the premises with the child unless instructed as part of an agreed emergency safeguarding plan.

Any late-collection charge is governed by the current fee schedule. Persistent lateness may lead to a meeting with the Manager and, where necessary, safeguarding consideration or review of the child's place.

Learning and Development Policy

Aim

Footsteps Preschool provides an ambitious, inclusive and play-rich curriculum that meets the EYFS learning and development requirements and supports children to make progress from their individual starting points.

The curriculum

The curriculum is built around the seven areas of learning and development. The three prime areas are Communication and Language; Physical Development; and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The four specific areas are Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design.

All seven areas are important and interconnected. The curriculum is delivered through a responsive balance of child-led play, adult-guided teaching, purposeful routines, conversation, stories, songs, real-life experiences, outdoor learning and Forest School opportunities.

Practitioners use their knowledge of individual children to decide what to teach, how to teach it and when to intervene. Planning is flexible and may include planning in the moment, short focused experiences and longer curriculum themes where these are meaningful to the children.

Assessment

Assessment is primarily based on practitioners knowing children well. Staff observe children during ordinary play and routines, identify what they know and can do, and use this information to plan appropriate teaching and support.

Footsteps uses Tapestry to record selected significant observations, achievements and information for families. Tapestry is a communication and learning tool, not a requirement to produce large quantities of written evidence. Practitioners are not expected to photograph or record every learning experience.

The setting may use non-statutory guidance such as Birth to 5 Matters to support professional judgement. Such guidance is not used as a checklist or to label children.

Progress check at age two

For children within the statutory age range, the setting will complete the progress check at age two in partnership with parents/carers. It will summarise the child's development in the prime areas, identify strengths and any areas where progress is less than expected, and describe how the setting will support the child. Where appropriate, the setting will encourage parents to share the check with relevant health professionals and will work collaboratively where concerns are identified.

SEND and early identification

Practitioners remain alert to emerging developmental concerns. Concerns are discussed sensitively with parents/carers and the SENDCo. Support may include adjustments to the environment, targeted teaching, individual support plans, advice from external professionals and applications for additional funding where appropriate.

School readiness and transition

School readiness at Footsteps means supporting children to become confident, curious, communicative, increasingly independent learners. It includes emotional security, self-care, listening and communication, relationships, physical development, early literacy and mathematics, resilience and a positive attitude to learning.

The setting works with receiving schools and families to support transition. Information is shared lawfully and proportionately so that children's strengths, interests and support needs are understood.

Partnership with families

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. The setting maintains regular two-way communication through conversations, Tapestry, consultations and transition discussions and welcomes information about learning and experiences at home.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy statement

Footsteps Preschool is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns must be acted upon promptly. The child's welfare is paramount.

This policy is aligned with the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the statutory information-sharing guidance effective from 30 September 2026, the Prevent duty, and Hampshire local safeguarding procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Danielle Lapworth

Deputy DSL: Elizabeth Winning

The DSL or a suitably trained deputy must be available to staff when the setting is operating. Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed because the DSL is temporarily unavailable.

What safeguarding includes

Safeguarding includes protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring safe and effective care; taking action so children have the best outcomes; and identifying children who may need help or protection.

Staff remain alert to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse and coercive control, child sexual and criminal exploitation, county lines, trafficking and modern slavery, online abuse, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, fabricated or induced illness, FGM, forced marriage, honour-based abuse, abuse linked to faith or belief, radicalisation, and other forms of harm.

Behaviour, attendance, injuries, changes in presentation, comments made by children, family circumstances and patterns over time can all contribute to a safeguarding picture. Staff must avoid assuming that another professional already knows.

Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child discloses something concerning, the practitioner will:

- listen calmly and take the child seriously;
- avoid leading questions or promising secrecy;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking;
- record the child's words as accurately as possible, including date, time and context;
- report the concern to the DSL immediately;
- take urgent protective action where a child is in immediate danger.

Staff do not investigate suspected abuse. The DSL decides the appropriate referral or consultation route, but any practitioner may contact Children's Services or police directly if necessary to protect a child, particularly if they believe appropriate action is not being taken.

Referrals and immediate risk

Where there is an immediate danger, staff will call 999. Safeguarding concerns requiring Children's Services involvement will be referred in accordance with Hampshire procedures. Professionals should use the Hampshire Inter-Agency Referral Form and may use the professional urgent child-protection line where appropriate.

The setting does not need parental consent to share information where doing so is necessary to safeguard a child. Parents will normally be informed about referrals unless doing so could increase risk to the child or another person, compromise an investigation or conflict with advice from Children's Services or police.

Information sharing

Relevant information will be shared lawfully, proportionately, accurately, securely and without unnecessary delay. From 30 September 2026, the setting will also comply with the statutory information-sharing duty where it applies. Data-protection law is not a reason to withhold information needed to safeguard a child.

Allegations or concerns about adults working with children

Any allegation or concern that a person working or volunteering with children has harmed a child, may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against a child, may pose a risk of harm, or may be unsuitable to work with children must be reported immediately to the Manager/DSL. Where the concern is about the Manager, it must be reported to the provider/Director without alerting the Manager first.

The Hampshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed within one working day where the allegation threshold is met. The setting will also make required notifications to Ofsted and, where appropriate, the Disclosure and Barring Service or other bodies.

Ofsted must be notified of allegations of harm or abuse by a person living, working or looking after children at the premises as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days, together with the action taken.

Concerns that do not meet the LADO threshold may still be managed as lower-level conduct or suitability concerns under the staff code, supervision, disciplinary or whistleblowing procedures. Patterns of lower-level concerns will be reviewed.

Child absences as safeguarding information

Unexplained or prolonged absence will be followed up promptly. Staff will consider patterns, the child's vulnerability, family circumstances and any existing concerns. Parents/carers and emergency contacts will be contacted and safeguarding procedures followed where appropriate. Children's Services and/or police welfare checks will be requested where necessary.

Record keeping

Safeguarding records are factual, dated, signed/attributed and stored securely with access limited to those who need it. Records should distinguish fact, observation, disclosure and professional opinion. Safeguarding information follows the child when appropriate, using secure transfer arrangements.

Hampshire safeguarding contacts

Emergency: 999

Hampshire Children's Services public line: 0300 555 1384

Hampshire Children's Services out of hours: 0300 555 1373

Hampshire professionals urgent child-protection line: 01329 225379

Hampshire LADO: use the current Hampshire LADO enquiry/referral process; referral email LADO@hants.gov.uk where directed.

Ofsted concerns about childcare: 0300 123 4666

Ofsted general enquiries: 0300 123 1231

NSPCC helpline: 0800 800 5000

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: 0800 028 0285

Childline: 0800 1111

Contact details will be checked at each safeguarding-policy review and updated sooner if the local authority or regulator changes them.

Whistleblowing, Allegations and Concerns About Adults Policy

Aim

Footsteps Preschool promotes a culture in which staff, students and volunteers can raise concerns about unsafe, unlawful or poor practice without fear of victimisation.

Whistleblowing

Concerns may include safeguarding failures, unsafe practice, concealment of wrongdoing, serious breaches of policy, fraud, unlawful conduct or behaviour that places children, staff or the public at risk.

Where possible, concerns should be raised with Danielle Lapworth as Manager. If the concern relates to the Manager, or the person raising the concern reasonably believes it cannot be raised with her, it should be raised with the provider/Director. Concerns should be recorded clearly, including what was seen or heard, dates, times and who was present.

No member of staff will be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith, even if the concern is not substantiated. Deliberately malicious or knowingly false allegations may be addressed under disciplinary procedures.

Where an internal route is inappropriate or a concern is not being addressed, staff may use external channels including the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line, Ofsted, Hampshire Children's Services, the LADO or police as relevant.

Allegation management

Safeguarding allegations about adults will be managed in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Hampshire allegations procedures. The setting will not conduct an internal investigation before seeking appropriate LADO advice where the threshold may be met.

Necessary interim measures may include changes to duties, increased supervision or suspension. Suspension is a neutral protective measure, not an assumption of guilt, and will be used only where proportionate.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible. Information will be shared only with those who need it for safeguarding, investigation, support or legal reasons.

Low-level or conduct concerns

Behaviour that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct but does not appear to meet the LADO threshold must still be reported. The Manager will record, review and respond proportionately and consider whether there is a pattern, training need, suitability issue or disciplinary matter.

Prevent and Radicalisation Policy

Statement

Footsteps Preschool recognises the Prevent duty as part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities. Prevent is concerned with identifying and supporting people who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Practitioners are not expected to become experts in extremism or to make assumptions based on religion, ethnicity, culture, family background or political views. The same child-centred safeguarding approach applies as with other welfare concerns.

Practice

Staff will:

- complete Prevent awareness training appropriate to their role;
- understand that radicalisation can occur online and offline;
- remain alert to concerning changes in behaviour, language, relationships or online exposure while avoiding stereotypes;
- encourage respectful discussion, curiosity, inclusion, critical thinking and age-appropriate British values through everyday practice;
- report concerns promptly to the DSL rather than attempting to investigate them.

The DSL will consider the concern alongside the child's wider circumstances and current local procedures. Where appropriate, advice or referral will be sought through the National Prevent Referral process and/or Hampshire Children's Services. If there is an immediate risk of harm, the police will be contacted.

Safeguarding records relating to Prevent concerns will be managed in the same secure, proportionate way as other safeguarding records.

Female Genital Mutilation and Honour-Based Abuse Policy

Statement

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse. Footsteps Preschool treats any concern about FGM, forced marriage or honour-based abuse as a safeguarding matter requiring prompt action.

Staff should be alert to information indicating that a child may be at risk, has undergone FGM or may be taken abroad for a procedure. Staff must not examine a child to determine whether FGM has occurred.

Any concern, disclosure or observation must be reported immediately to the DSL and managed under the safeguarding procedure. Suspected or at-risk cases are referred through normal safeguarding routes.

The statutory mandatory reporting duty for known cases of FGM applies personally to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers covered by the legislation. If an individual working at Footsteps falls within that statutory definition and a known case is identified in the course of their professional work, they must make the required police report and should also follow the setting's safeguarding procedures. Other early years practitioners remain responsible for taking appropriate safeguarding action even where the personal mandatory reporting duty does not apply to them.

Staff Safeguarding Training Policy

Requirement

All practitioners must receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria in the current EYFS framework and enables them to understand and implement Footsteps Preschool's safeguarding procedures confidently.

Safeguarding training will form part of induction before staff are left to work independently. It will include, as appropriate to role:

- recognising signs and indicators of abuse and neglect;
- child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour;
- domestic abuse, exploitation, online harm, FGM, forced marriage and Prevent;
- responding to disclosures and recording concerns;
- local referral routes and escalation;
- allegations against adults and whistleblowing;
- information sharing and confidentiality;
- use of mobile phones, cameras and devices;
- safer recruitment and staff conduct for managers and relevant staff.

Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every two years. The setting will provide updates, briefings, discussion and supervision between formal courses whenever changes in legislation, local procedures, emerging risks or practice concerns make this necessary.

The DSL and deputy DSL will undertake role-appropriate DSL training and maintain current knowledge of Hampshire procedures. Training records, dates and certificates will be monitored by the Manager.

Anti-Bullying and Child-on-Child Behaviour Policy

Approach

Young children are still developing language, empathy, impulse control and social understanding. Conflict, physical behaviour and repeated unkindness can occur in early childhood and must be supported appropriately. Staff will not label a young child as a "bully" where their behaviour is better understood as a developmental or communication need.

Bullying is generally understood as behaviour that is deliberately hurtful, repeated over time and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. Where such a pattern is identified, the setting will act promptly.

Practice

Staff will:

- intervene calmly to keep children safe;

- support the child who has been harmed;
- help all children understand feelings, boundaries and repair relationships in developmentally appropriate ways;
- identify patterns, triggers and environmental factors;
- consider SEND, communication, sensory and emotional needs;
- record significant or repeated incidents;
- involve parents/carers appropriately;
- create an individual support plan where needed.

Any behaviour that may indicate abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, discrimination, exploitation or another safeguarding concern will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy and referred as necessary.

Discriminatory language or behaviour based on race, religion, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, family structure or any other protected characteristic will be challenged and addressed in an age-appropriate way.

Mobile Phones, Smartwatches, Cameras and Personal Devices Policy

Aim

To protect children's privacy and safety by controlling the use of devices with imaging, recording, messaging or sharing capabilities.

Staff personal devices

Personal mobile phones, smartwatches with communication or camera functions, tablets, cameras and similar devices must not be used in areas where children are being cared for. Staff must store personal devices in the designated secure location during working time, except during authorised breaks in an appropriate staff area away from children.

Personal devices must never be used to photograph, film or record children, access children's records, communicate with parents on behalf of the setting, or store setting information.

Where an individual requires a personal device for a documented medical or accessibility reason, the Manager will agree a specific risk-managed arrangement.

Setting devices

Only setting-approved equipment may be used to take photographs or videos for legitimate educational, safeguarding or operational purposes. Images must be handled in line with parental permissions, the Photography Policy and Data Protection Policy. Setting devices must be access-controlled and must not be used for personal activity.

Visitors, students and parents

Visitors, contractors, students and volunteers are expected to keep personal devices away while in child areas unless the Manager has specifically authorised their use for a legitimate purpose. Parents/carers must not photograph or film other people's children without permission.

Breaches

Any suspected misuse of a device must be reported immediately to the Manager/DSL. Depending on the circumstances, the device may need to be secured without unnecessary access to its contents and advice sought from the provider, LADO, police, Ofsted or other agencies. Staff must not attempt their own forensic examination of a device.

Online Safety and Children's Screen Use Policy

Statement

Technology can support communication and learning, but it also creates risks including inappropriate content, online contact, privacy breaches, excessive screen use and poor cyber security. Footsteps Preschool uses technology purposefully, sparingly and safely.

The setting has regard to the 2026 EYFS requirement on children's screen use and relevant Department for Education guidance.

Children's use of screens

Screen use will not replace high-quality interaction, physical activity, outdoor play, books, creative experiences or hands-on exploration. Where screens are used, they will have a clear educational purpose, be time-limited and supervised by a practitioner.

Footsteps does not permit children or staff to use social media platforms or open-access YouTube for children's activities within the setting. Staff may use only setting-approved digital resources that have been checked for suitability, advertising, privacy and content risks.

Staff responsibilities

Staff must:

- supervise children whenever digital technology is used;
- check online content before showing it to children;
- use strong passwords and approved accounts;
- avoid sharing log-in details;
- report suspicious messages, data breaches or harmful content immediately;
- use only setting-approved systems for children's information and images;
- follow the Mobile Phone and Data Protection policies.

Tapestry and electronic learning records

Tapestry is used as a controlled platform for selected learning information and communication with families. Access is role-based. Staff and families must not download, copy or share images or information about other children outside the platform.

Cyber security

The setting will maintain reasonable cyber-security measures including software updates, access control, secure Wi-Fi, appropriate backups and staff awareness of phishing and suspicious links. Any suspected data breach will be reported immediately to the Manager and handled under the Data Protection Policy.

Safer Recruitment and Staff Suitability Policy

Aim

Footsteps Preschool is committed to recruiting people who are suitable to work with children and to maintaining a culture of ongoing suitability after appointment.

Recruitment process

Recruitment will normally include:

- a clear job description and person specification;
- an application process that enables scrutiny of employment history;
- identity and right-to-work checks;
- verification of relevant qualifications;
- exploration of gaps or inconsistencies in employment, education or training history;
- a structured interview including safeguarding questions;
- enhanced DBS and barred-list checks where required;
- overseas checks or additional evidence where relevant;
- references obtained directly by the setting;
- consideration of disqualification requirements where applicable.

The setting will obtain at least one written reference before recruitment, in line with the EYFS. Wherever reasonably practicable, two satisfactory references will be sought. Open references or references supplied only by the applicant will not be relied upon. References should come from an appropriate senior person and will be verified where information is vague, inconsistent or raises concern.

No person will begin regulated work or volunteering, or have unsupervised contact with children, until the required enhanced DBS and barred-list checks have been received and the setting is satisfied as to suitability, except where a narrowly defined statutory exception applies and is formally risk assessed.

Recruitment records

The setting will keep appropriate records of identity checks, qualifications, vetting processes, references and DBS information required by the EYFS. DBS certificate content will be handled lawfully and confidentially.

Ongoing suitability

Staff must disclose information that may affect their suitability to work with children. The Manager will address relevant arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, safeguarding concerns, disqualification information, health or conduct matters promptly and fairly.

Where a member of staff is dismissed, removed from regulated activity, or would have been dismissed had they not resigned because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child, the setting will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the legal referral conditions are met.

Induction and probation

New staff will complete induction covering safeguarding, child protection, emergency procedures, first aid arrangements, behaviour support, medication, allergies, health and safety, whistleblowing, confidentiality and device use. Performance and conduct will be reviewed during probation and supervision.

Attendance and Child Absence Policy

Aim

Regular attendance supports children's learning, wellbeing and safeguarding. Although preschool attendance is not compulsory in the same way as school attendance, unexplained or prolonged absence can be an important safeguarding indicator.

Parent/carers expectations

Parents/carers must notify the setting as soon as possible when a child will be absent and provide the reason. Where possible, planned absences should be discussed in advance.

Setting procedure

A daily register will record each child's attendance and hours. If a child is absent without notification, staff will follow up in a timely manner by contacting parents/carers and, where necessary, emergency contacts.

The Manager/DSL will consider:

- how long the child has been absent;
- any emerging pattern or trend;
- the child's known vulnerability or additional needs;
- family circumstances and parental vulnerability;
- previous safeguarding concerns;
- information from other professionals where lawfully available.

There is no single number of days that automatically defines a safeguarding concern. Professional judgement will be used. Where contact cannot be established or concerns increase, the setting will follow safeguarding procedures, contact Hampshire Children's Services and/or request a police welfare check where appropriate.

Attendance concerns and significant follow-up actions will be recorded. The setting will work supportively with families and other professionals to address barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and British Values Policy

Statement

Footsteps Preschool is committed to equality of opportunity, inclusive practice and respectful relationships. Every child and family should feel that they belong and can participate fully in the life of the setting.

The setting will meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will not unlawfully discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The setting also recognises the importance of family structure, language, culture, socioeconomic circumstances and individual identity in children's experiences.

Inclusive practice

We will:

- challenge discriminatory language, stereotypes and exclusion;
- provide books, images, resources and experiences that reflect diverse families, cultures, abilities and communities;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and adults where required;
- identify barriers to participation and remove or reduce them wherever reasonably possible;
- support children with English as an additional language while valuing home languages;
- work with parents/carers and professionals to meet individual needs;
- ensure admissions, staffing and access to opportunities are fair and transparent.

SEND

Children with SEND are entitled to high expectations and full participation. Support will be based on need rather than waiting for a diagnosis. The SENDCo will work with staff and families to plan adjustments, seek advice and review impact.

Fundamental British values

British values are promoted through age-appropriate everyday experiences rather than isolated lessons. Children are supported to experience:

- democracy through choices, turn-taking and having their views heard;
- the rule of law through simple, consistent boundaries that help everyone stay safe;
- individual liberty through supported choice, confidence and independence;
- mutual respect and tolerance through positive relationships, curiosity about difference and respectful discussion.

The setting does not promote partisan political views. Where children encounter political or controversial material indirectly, staff will remain neutral and focus on respect, safety and developmentally appropriate understanding.

Employment

Employment decisions will be based on the requirements of the role, suitability, skills, qualifications and experience. Discriminatory or derogatory conduct by staff will be addressed promptly through safeguarding, supervision or disciplinary processes as appropriate.

Self-Regulation and Supporting Behaviour Policy

Named person

Named Person for Self-Regulation and Supporting Behaviour: Danielle Lapworth

Our approach

Footsteps Preschool understands behaviour as communication. Young children are learning to recognise feelings, manage impulses, cope with frustration, share, wait, negotiate and recover from disappointment. These abilities develop over time and can be affected by communication, SEND, sensory needs, trauma, tiredness, hunger, relationships and changes in a child's life.

Our role is to teach and support self-regulation, not to demand emotional control that is beyond a child's developmental capacity.

Staff practice

Staff will:

- build warm, secure and predictable relationships;
- model calm, respectful behaviour and language;
- maintain clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate boundaries;
- acknowledge feelings while setting limits on unsafe behaviour;
- use co-regulation, distraction, redirection, problem-solving and visual or sensory support where helpful;
- notice triggers and patterns rather than focusing only on the final behaviour;
- adapt expectations for children's communication and developmental needs;
- give specific praise and encouragement without relying on reward systems that shame or compare children;
- support repair after conflict rather than forcing apologies that have no meaning to the child;
- record and review significant or repeated incidents.

During difficult moments

If a child is overwhelmed, staff will reduce language, remain calm, protect safety and offer an appropriate level of proximity and support. The aim is to help the child return to a regulated state before attempting reflection or problem-solving.

Children will not be humiliated, isolated as punishment, threatened, shouted at, labelled as naughty, denied food, drink, rest or toileting, or subjected to corporal punishment or punishment that could negatively affect their wellbeing.

Individual support

Where behaviour is frequent, intense or creates a risk of harm, the Manager/SENDCo will work with the key person and family to understand the behaviour and develop consistent support. This may include observations, environmental changes, communication support, an individual behaviour or regulation plan, risk assessment and advice from external professionals.

A child's behaviour must not be treated as grounds for exclusion without careful consideration of reasonable adjustments, SEND duties, safeguarding and the impact of the setting's own practice.

Physical intervention

Physical intervention is governed by the Physical Intervention Policy. It is used only where absolutely necessary to avert immediate danger of injury or to manage behaviour where reasonable force is necessary to prevent injury or serious damage. Every use is recorded and parents/carers are informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Data Protection and UK GDPR Policy

Statement

Footsteps Preschool processes personal information about children, families, staff, applicants, volunteers and others in order to operate safely, meet legal duties and provide early years education and care. Personal information will be handled lawfully, fairly, transparently and securely.

The setting works in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable information-law requirements.

Data-protection principles

Personal data will be:

- processed lawfully, fairly and transparently;
- collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes;
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary;
- accurate and kept up to date where necessary;
- retained only for as long as required;
- protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage.

Lawful processing

Consent is not the only lawful basis for processing information. The setting may process information because it is necessary to meet legal obligations, deliver a contract, protect vital interests, perform a task in the public interest or pursue a legitimate interest, depending on the circumstances. Special category data requires an additional lawful condition.

Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where the law permits or requires this and sharing is necessary to protect a child or another person.

Security

Paper and electronic records will be protected using measures appropriate to their sensitivity. These include secure storage, access controls, password protection, appropriate device security, secure disposal, staff training and restrictions on use of personal devices.

Staff must not send personal information through unapproved personal email, messaging or cloud-storage accounts. Printed documents containing personal information must not be left unattended in public or child-accessible areas.

Individual rights

Individuals may have rights including access to their personal data, correction of inaccurate data, restriction or objection in certain circumstances, and other rights under data-protection law. Requests will be passed promptly to the person responsible for data protection so statutory time limits can be met.

A parent/carer does not automatically have an unrestricted right to every document mentioning their child. Requests will be assessed under data-protection law, safeguarding duties and the rights of other people.

Data breaches

Any suspected loss, unauthorised disclosure, cyber incident or access to personal data must be reported to the Manager immediately. The setting will contain and assess the breach, document decisions and notify the Information Commissioner's Office and affected individuals where the legal threshold is met.

Retention and disposal

Records will be retained in accordance with legal, regulatory, safeguarding, insurance and operational requirements. When records reach the end of their retention period they will be securely destroyed or deleted.

Privacy information

The setting will provide appropriate privacy information explaining what personal data is collected, why it is used, who it may be shared with, how long it is retained and how individuals may exercise their rights.

Health and Safety Policy

Policy statement

Footsteps Preschool is committed to providing and maintaining a safe, healthy and secure environment for children, employees, parents/carers, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors.

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff must take reasonable care of themselves and others, follow safe systems of work and report hazards promptly. The setting will comply with relevant health and safety law and the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Manager and Health and Safety Lead

Preschool Manager and designated Health and Safety Lead: Danielle Lapworth

The Manager is responsible for the day-to-day coordination of health and safety and will:

- ensure the premises, equipment and outdoor spaces are suitable and appropriately maintained;
- oversee risk assessments and daily checks;
- ensure hazards are acted upon promptly;
- maintain suitable fire and emergency arrangements;
- ensure sufficient first-aid provision and staff training;
- monitor accidents, incidents and near misses;
- ensure hazardous substances are stored and used safely;
- ensure staff receive relevant information, supervision and training;
- review arrangements after significant incidents or changes.

Staff responsibilities

All staff, students and volunteers must:

- follow this policy and associated risk assessments;
- remain alert to hazards throughout the day;
- take prompt action to remove or isolate hazards where safe to do so;
- report defects, damage and unsafe practice;
- use equipment only for its intended purpose;
- maintain appropriate supervision of children;
- complete required accident, incident and safety records;
- participate in training and emergency drills;
- use personal protective equipment where required.

Premises and equipment

Opening and closing checks will cover access and security, floors, rooms, toilets, garden areas, gates, fencing, play equipment, fire exits, lighting, heating and obvious hazards. Equipment that is damaged, contaminated, unstable or otherwise unsafe will be removed from use until repaired or disposed of.

The setting will maintain daily outdoor access unless circumstances make this inappropriate. Indoor space, equipment and room organisation will reflect the age and needs of children and applicable EYFS space requirements.

Banned dog breeds covered by the current EYFS requirement must not be kept or present on premises while childcare is provided, including where an owner holds an exemption certificate.

COSHH and hazardous substances

Cleaning products and hazardous substances will be stored securely, labelled and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and COSHH requirements. Chemicals will never be transferred into food or drink containers. Relevant safety information and protective equipment will be available to staff.

Smoking, vaping, alcohol and substances

Smoking is prohibited on the premises when children are present or about to be present. Staff must not vape or use e-cigarettes in the presence of children. No person may care for children while under the influence of alcohol or another substance that could impair safe care.

Staff medication and fitness to work

A staff member taking medication that may affect their ability to care for children should seek appropriate medical advice and inform the Manager where necessary. Medication on the premises must be stored securely and out of children's reach.

Reporting and review

Accidents, incidents, near misses and risk assessments will be reviewed for patterns. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following significant change, new guidance or a serious incident.

Accident and Incident Reporting Policy

Immediate response

The priority following an accident or incident is to make the area safe, provide appropriate first aid, obtain emergency medical assistance where required and protect the child or adult from further harm.

Records

The setting will keep a written record of accidents, injuries and first-aid treatment. Records will include sufficient factual detail to understand what happened, the injury or symptoms, action taken, who provided first aid and when parents/carers were informed.

Parents/carers will be informed of an accident or injury sustained by their child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, and of any first aid treatment given.

Incidents that do not cause injury but are relevant to behaviour, safeguarding, property damage or safety will be recorded on the appropriate incident or safeguarding record rather than being incorrectly placed in an accident book.

Serious incidents and notifications

The Manager will assess whether an incident requires external notification. Registered providers must notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness, injury to, or death of, a child while in their care and the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 14 days. Local child-protection agencies must also be notified of serious accident, injury or death where required by the EYFS.

The setting will also consider whether an event is reportable under RIDDOR and will make a report to the Health and Safety Executive where the statutory reporting criteria are met.

Food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises will be notified to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days, in addition to any public-health reporting required.

Review

Significant accidents, recurring minor injuries and near misses will be reviewed to identify patterns and determine whether risk controls, supervision, environment or practice need to change.

Risk-Benefit Assessment Policy

Principle

Children learn through exploration, challenge and manageable risk. Footsteps Preschool therefore uses a risk-benefit approach: the aim is not to remove all risk, but to identify hazards, understand the value of an activity and put proportionate controls in place.

Process

Risk assessment will consider:

- the hazard and potential harm;
- who may be affected;
- existing controls;
- likelihood and severity;
- the developmental benefit of the activity where relevant;
- additional controls required;
- who is responsible and by when;
- whether the remaining risk is acceptable.

The setting will decide when a written risk assessment is helpful or legally required. Significant findings will be recorded where required under health and safety law and where written documentation is necessary to guide staff practice or demonstrate how risk is managed.

Review triggers

Risk assessments will be reviewed when:

- there is a significant accident, incident or near miss;
- equipment, premises or activities change;
- a child's individual needs change;
- new information becomes available;
- staff identify that current controls are ineffective;
- legislation or guidance changes.

Children will be supported to recognise and manage age-appropriate risks rather than being prevented from taking reasonable developmental challenges.

Daily Safety Check Policy

Purpose

Daily checks support staff vigilance but do not replace continuous supervision and professional judgement.

Opening checks

Before children access an area, staff will check, as relevant:

- doors, gates, fences and access controls;
- floors, walkways and trip hazards;
- toys, furniture and play equipment;
- toilets, handwashing and changing facilities;
- outdoor surfaces, animal waste, broken glass, hazardous plants or objects;
- fire exits and escape routes;
- heating, lighting and ventilation;
- kitchen and food areas;
- electrical equipment and visible cable damage;
- emergency and first-aid equipment where included in the setting checklist.

Hazards will be removed, repaired, isolated or made inaccessible before children use the affected area where necessary. Issues that cannot be immediately resolved will be reported to the Manager and documented with an action plan.

Ongoing checks

Staff remain responsible for noticing hazards throughout the session. Spillages, broken resources, unsecured gates, unsafe stacking, damaged equipment and changes caused by weather or play must be addressed promptly.

Closing checks

Closing checks will ensure children have left safely, premises and outdoor areas are secure, electrical and kitchen equipment is left safely, confidential records are secured and any unresolved issue is communicated for action before the next session.

Physical Intervention and Safe Handling Policy

Principle

Footsteps Preschool does not use physical intervention as punishment or for staff convenience. Corporal punishment, threats of corporal punishment and any punishment that could negatively affect a child's wellbeing are prohibited.

When physical intervention may be used

Reasonable physical intervention may be used only where it is absolutely necessary to avert immediate danger of personal injury or to manage behaviour where reasonable force is necessary to prevent injury or serious damage to property.

Examples may include stopping a child running into a road, separating children where there is an immediate risk of significant injury, or preventing a child from using an object in a way that could cause serious harm.

Staff should use the least restrictive response for the shortest necessary time. Whenever possible they should use calm verbal support, environmental changes, redirection and co-regulation first.

What is not acceptable

Staff must not use pain-compliance techniques, shaking, slapping, pinching, forced feeding, unnecessary restraint, degrading holds or physical force intended to punish, frighten or humiliate.

Recording and informing parents

Every occasion on which physical intervention is used to manage a child's behaviour will be recorded. Parents/carers will be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Manager will review the circumstances, including whether the child's plan or risk assessment needs updating and whether staff need additional support or training.

Planned support

Where a child presents a foreseeable risk of significant harm, the setting will work with parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop an individual support and risk-management plan. Planned restrictive intervention must not be introduced casually and will be informed by suitable professional advice and training.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Policy

Named SENDCo

Lead SENDCo: Danielle Lapworth

Secondary SENDCo support: Abbie Howard

Statement

Footsteps Preschool welcomes children with SEND and is committed to early identification, inclusive teaching and partnership with families. The setting has regard to the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and relevant duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010.

Graduated approach

Support follows a cycle of assess, plan, do and review. Staff will:

- observe the child's strengths, interests and areas of difficulty;
- discuss concerns with parents/carers early and sensitively;
- adapt teaching, routines and the environment;
- identify specific outcomes and strategies where needed;
- review whether support is helping;
- seek external advice with parental involvement where appropriate.

A child does not need a diagnosis before reasonable adjustments or targeted support can begin.

Role of the SENDCo

The SENDCo will:

- support practitioners to identify and respond to emerging needs;
- coordinate individual support plans and reviews where appropriate;
- work with parents/carers as partners;
- liaise with external professionals and the local authority;
- support applications for SEND inclusion funding, Disability Access Fund or other resources where applicable;
- maintain appropriate records;
- promote inclusive practice and staff development.

Parents and children's views

Parents/carers will be involved in decisions about support and will receive clear information about concerns, strategies and progress. Children's communication, preferences and responses will be considered in developmentally appropriate ways.

Transition

Additional transition arrangements will be made where a child may need them, including information sharing with receiving schools or settings, visits and multi-agency planning where appropriate.

Confidentiality and Information-Sharing Policy

Statement

Families and staff must be able to trust that sensitive information will be handled respectfully and only shared for legitimate reasons. Confidentiality is important, but it is not absolute: information must be shared where necessary to safeguard a child or meet another legal duty.

Staff expectations

Staff will:

- discuss confidential matters only with people who need the information for their role;
- avoid conversations about children or families in public areas or on social media;
- store records securely;
- use approved communication systems;
- share only information that is relevant, accurate and proportionate;
- record significant information-sharing decisions in safeguarding cases.

Staff must never promise a child or parent absolute secrecy where safeguarding may be involved.

Safeguarding information sharing

Where information is relevant to safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare, practitioners will follow current statutory information-sharing guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children and local procedures. From 30 September 2026, the setting will comply with the statutory information-sharing duty where it applies.

Consent may be appropriate for many routine information-sharing situations, but it is not required where another lawful basis applies. If seeking consent would place a child at greater risk, cause delay or prejudice an investigation, information may be shared without consent where lawful and necessary.

Access to records

Requests for access to personal information will be managed under the Data Protection Policy. Information about third parties or safeguarding may need to be redacted or withheld where a legal exemption applies.

Staff confidentiality

Information about staff health, performance, disciplinary matters and personal circumstances will also be kept confidential and shared only where there is a legitimate need.

Complaints and Concerns Policy

Principle

Footsteps Preschool welcomes feedback and aims to resolve concerns fairly, promptly and respectfully. Raising a concern will not adversely affect a child's care.

Informal concerns

Where appropriate, parents/carers are encouraged to raise day-to-day concerns with the child's key person or Manager so they can be addressed quickly. A concern involving safeguarding, discrimination, staff conduct or another serious matter should be brought directly to the Manager/DSL or provider as appropriate.

Formal complaints

A formal complaint should be made in writing where possible. The setting will acknowledge it, investigate the issues and provide a written outcome.

For written complaints relating to fulfilment of the EYFS requirements, the setting will notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint, in accordance with the EYFS.

The record will include the nature of the complaint, how it was investigated, findings, action taken and whether the complainant was informed of the outcome. Complaint records will be made available to Ofsted on request.

Escalation

If the complaint concerns the Manager, it should be directed to the provider/Director. If a parent/carer believes the setting is not meeting EYFS requirements, they may contact Ofsted.

Ofsted concerns about childcare: 0300 123 4666

Ofsted general enquiries: 0300 123 1231

Safeguarding concerns should not be delayed while the complaints process is followed. Where a complaint indicates that a child may be at risk, the Safeguarding Policy takes priority and appropriate agencies will be contacted.

Medicines, Illness and Individual Health Care Policy

Medicines

Footsteps Preschool will administer medication only where this is necessary to meet a child's health needs and can be done safely.

Before medication is given, the setting must have written permission for that particular medicine from the child's parent/carer. The setting will obtain and keep up-to-date information about the child's medication needs.

Prescription medicines will not be administered unless prescribed for the child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Medicines containing aspirin will only be given if prescribed by a doctor.

Non-prescription medication may be administered only in accordance with the setting's agreed procedure, with written parental permission and where the Manager is satisfied that giving it is safe and appropriate. The setting will not use medication to enable a child who is too unwell to participate comfortably to remain in preschool.

Administration record

Each administration will be recorded, including the medicine, dose, time and person administering it. Parents/carers will be informed on the same day or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where administration requires medical or technical knowledge, staff must have appropriate training.

Emergency medication such as adrenaline auto-injectors or inhalers will be immediately accessible to authorised adults while remaining inaccessible to children.

Individual health care

Children with significant or ongoing medical needs may have an individual healthcare plan and/or risk assessment developed with parents/carers and health professionals as appropriate. Plans will identify symptoms, medication, emergency response, storage, staff training and any adjustments required.

Illness and infection

Children who become unwell will be comforted and supervised. Parents/carers will be contacted where the child needs to go home. Emergency services will be called where symptoms indicate a medical emergency.

The setting will follow current UK Health Security Agency guidance on exclusion and infection control rather than relying on an outdated fixed list. In particular, diarrhoea and vomiting generally require exclusion for 48 hours after the last episode unless current public-health advice states otherwise.

First Aid Policy

Provision

At least one person with a current paediatric first-aid certificate must be on the premises and available whenever children are present, and a suitably qualified paediatric first aider must accompany children on outings.

Footsteps will plan first-aid cover according to the number and needs of children, staffing arrangements, premises and activities. Certificates and renewal dates will be monitored.

Eating

While children are eating, there will always be a member of staff in the room who holds a valid full paediatric first-aid certificate meeting the EYFS criteria.

First-aid equipment

Appropriate first-aid boxes will be readily accessible to adults but inaccessible to children. Contents will be checked and replenished routinely. Medication is not stored in a general first-aid box unless the relevant arrangements specifically require it.

Treatment

Staff will use appropriate hygiene precautions and personal protective equipment where bodily fluids are involved. Treatment will be recorded and parents/carers informed in line with the Accident Policy.

In a medical emergency, staff will call 999 without waiting for parental permission. Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible. A member of staff will accompany the child to hospital if required and if a parent/carer is not yet present, while maintaining safe ratios and supervision for children remaining at the setting.

Allergies, Intolerances and Anaphylaxis Policy

Information before admission

Before a child starts, Footsteps Preschool will obtain information about dietary requirements, food preferences, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs. This information will be shared with all staff who prepare, handle or serve food and with other staff who need it to keep the child safe.

Allergy action plans

For known allergies or intolerances, the setting will maintain ongoing discussion with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals. An allergy action plan will be developed or obtained where necessary, using recognised templates such as the BSACI allergy action plan where suitable.

All staff will know the child's allergens, symptoms and required response. Information will be kept current and available without displaying more personal information than is necessary.

Food preparation and service

At every meal and snack time, responsibility for checking individual requirements will be clear. Staff will prevent cross-contact as far as reasonably practicable, check labels and follow agreed food-preparation procedures.

Children will not be excluded from normal experiences unnecessarily because of allergy. Reasonable alternatives will be provided where possible.

Anaphylaxis

Staff will be trained to recognise symptoms of anaphylaxis and know how to summon emergency help. Where prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors are provided, they will be stored so that trained staff can access them immediately.

If anaphylaxis is suspected, staff will follow the child's action plan, administer prescribed emergency medication where authorised and trained, call 999 and inform parents/carers. A child who has required emergency treatment for suspected anaphylaxis will always be medically assessed.

Developing allergies

Staff recognise that children can develop allergies at any time. New or unexplained symptoms following food or another exposure will be taken seriously and parents/carers advised appropriately.

Infection Prevention, Communicable Disease and Hygiene Policy

Aim

To reduce the spread of infection while maintaining an inclusive and proportionate approach to attendance.

Hand hygiene

Children and adults will be supported to wash hands effectively at appropriate times, including after using the toilet or changing nappies, before eating or handling food, after contact with bodily fluids and after activities where contamination is likely.

Cleaning

The setting will maintain appropriate routines for cleaning toys, surfaces, toilets, changing areas, food areas and high-touch points. Cleaning products will be used and stored safely in accordance with COSHH arrangements.

Bodily fluids and blood

Staff dealing with blood, vomit, urine, faeces or other bodily fluids will use appropriate protective equipment and follow safe cleaning and disposal procedures. Cuts or broken skin on adults should be covered. Contaminated waste will be disposed of safely.

All blood and bodily fluids will be treated as potentially infectious; children and adults with HIV, hepatitis or other blood-borne viruses will not be discriminated against.

Exclusion and outbreaks

Footsteps will follow the current UK Health Security Agency public-health exclusion guidance rather than maintaining a static table that may become outdated. Where advice changes, current national or local public-health guidance takes precedence.

Parents/carers must inform the setting of diagnosed infectious illnesses where this may affect other children or staff. The Manager will contact the local Health Protection Team where current guidance requires this, including where an outbreak is suspected.

Food poisoning

Suspected food poisoning will be managed urgently. Where food poisoning affects two or more children cared for on the premises, Ofsted will be notified within the EYFS timescale and the setting will cooperate with public-health and food-safety authorities.

Nappy Changing, Toileting and Intimate Care Policy

Principles

Intimate care will protect children's dignity, privacy, safety and developing independence. Children will never be shamed for accidents, continence, nappy use or toileting needs.

Changing and toileting

Staff will:

- use hygienic changing facilities and appropriate protective equipment;
- wash hands before and after intimate care as appropriate;
- clean changing surfaces between children;
- dispose of nappies and waste safely;
- encourage independence according to the child's development;
- explain what they are doing and seek the child's cooperation;
- respect privacy while maintaining safeguarding and supervision requirements.

A child will not be denied attendance solely because they are not toilet trained.

Safeguarding

Staff remain alert to unusual injuries, pain, fear, changes in toileting or comments made during intimate care. Concerns will be recorded and referred to the DSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Practitioners must not photograph intimate-care situations. Personal devices are prohibited.

Where a child requires a more complex intimate-care procedure, a written plan and any necessary staff training will be agreed with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Sleep and Rest Policy

General approach

Children will be offered rest according to their age, development, health and individual routine. Sleeping children will be supervised safely and checked regularly.

Footsteps Preschool will follow the current EYFS safer-sleep requirements. Where the setting does not routinely care for children under two, these requirements will still be understood in case a younger child is admitted in future or a child's individual needs require sleep arrangements.

Safer sleep for children under two

Children under two will be placed down to sleep in accordance with current EYFS requirements. This includes placing children on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface. Babies aged 12 months and under will be placed to sleep in a cot.

Sleep spaces will not contain toys, pillows, bumpers, wedges, straps or other unnecessary items. Bedding will be lightweight and arranged safely, or an appropriate well-fitted sleep bag may be used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

Babies under six months will have an adult in the same room for every sleep. All sleeping children will be checked frequently and will remain within sight and hearing of staff as required by the EYFS.

Individual needs

Parents/carers will be asked about sleep routines and relevant medical advice. Requests that conflict with safer-sleep requirements will not be followed unless supported by specific medical advice that the setting is able to implement safely.

Sleep checks and significant concerns will be recorded in accordance with the setting's procedure.

Food, Drink and Packed Lunch Policy

Healthy food and drink

Where Footsteps provides food or drink, it will be healthy, balanced and nutritious. The setting will have regard to the current Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance. Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible throughout the day.

Safer eating

Children will be seated safely and appropriately for their development. Distractions will be minimised and staff will support children to eat at a safe pace.

Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. A member of staff with a valid full paediatric first-aid qualification will be present in the room while children are eating.

Food will be prepared and presented to reduce choking risk, with consideration of size, texture, shape and the child's individual developmental stage. Staff will not assume chewing ability based solely on age.

Any significant choking incident will be recorded with details of what occurred and the food involved, parents/carers informed, and the event reviewed for learning.

Allergies and dietary needs

The Allergy Policy applies to all food and drink. Dietary, religious, cultural and medical needs will be respected wherever reasonably practicable.

Packed lunches

Families providing packed lunches are encouraged to provide varied, nutritious food. Guidance may include fruit or vegetables, a suitable starchy food, a protein source and an appropriate dairy or alternative item. The setting may restrict particular foods where required for allergy safety or choking prevention.

Food that presents a significant choking risk will not be served in an unsafe form. Whole grapes, nuts and similar high-risk foods will be managed in accordance with current food-safety guidance.

Celebrations

Where food is brought in for birthdays or celebrations, the setting will consider allergies, food hygiene, choking and nutritional guidance before serving it. Non-food celebration options are encouraged.

Photographs, Video and Tapestry Policy

Purpose

Photographs and video may support children's learning records, displays, transition, celebration and communication with families. Images are personal data and must be handled carefully.

Consent and lawful use

The setting will explain how photographs and video may be used and will obtain appropriate permissions where consent is the relevant basis. Safeguarding photographs taken for a legitimate protective purpose do not depend on routine marketing or learning-journal consent.

Parents/carers may change optional photograph permissions prospectively. The setting will explain where an image has already been lawfully published or incorporated into a completed record and cannot reasonably be withdrawn retrospectively.

Equipment

Only setting-approved devices may be used. Personal phones, smartwatches, cameras or tablets must never be used to capture children.

Images will be proportionate, respectful and appropriate. Children will not be photographed in intimate-care situations or in a state of undress.

Tapestry

Tapestry accounts are individual and password protected. Parents/carers must not share images or information relating to other children on social media or elsewhere. Staff will upload only information appropriate to the platform and will avoid unnecessary personal or safeguarding detail.

Publicity and social media

Images for the setting's website or public social-media account will be used only in accordance with the setting's permissions and safeguarding expectations. Names and images will not be combined in a way that unnecessarily identifies a child.

Clothing, Personal Belongings and Lost Property Policy

Children should wear comfortable clothing suitable for active indoor and outdoor play, messy experiences and the weather. Families are encouraged to label clothing and provide spare items where appropriate.

The setting may advise against clothing, jewellery or accessories that create a foreseeable strangulation, entrapment, choking or injury risk during particular activities. Religious, cultural, medical and disability-related clothing needs will be respected and risk managed proportionately.

Footsteps cannot guarantee against ordinary wear, staining or loss during active play. Staff will make reasonable efforts to return labelled belongings and will maintain a lost-property area for a reasonable period.

Medication, food, small batteries, nicotine products, sharp objects, cosmetics, coins and other potentially hazardous items must not be left in children's bags where children can access them.

Visits, Outings and Emergency Procedures Policy

Planning

Outings will be planned with regard to the destination, route, travel arrangements, supervision, staff deployment, individual needs, first aid, toileting, weather, emergency communication and the possibility of a child becoming separated from the group.

The Manager will determine appropriate staffing based on the risk assessment, age and needs of the children and the nature of the outing. Statutory ratios are a minimum consideration and may need to be exceeded for safety.

Routine local outings may be covered by ongoing permissions and a reviewed risk assessment. Higher-risk or unusual outings may require specific written consent and additional planning.

During the outing

Staff will maintain frequent headcounts and active supervision. Children will be clearly identified as part of the group in a manner that does not unnecessarily display personal information. Emergency contact details, required medication and appropriate first-aid equipment will be carried securely.

A current paediatric first aider will accompany the group. Where food is eaten on the outing, safer-eating and allergy requirements remain in force.

Transport

Vehicles and drivers used to transport children must be appropriately licensed and insured. Suitable child restraints will be used as required by law.

Emergency

If a child is seriously injured or unwell, staff will call emergency services, provide first aid and contact parents/carers. Ratios and supervision for the rest of the group will be maintained.

If a child is missing, the Missing Child Policy will be implemented immediately, including contacting police without delay when appropriate.

Staff Code of Conduct

Professional expectations

Staff are trusted with the care, safety and development of young children and are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct.

Staff must:

- place children's welfare first;
- maintain professional boundaries with children and families;
- speak respectfully to children, colleagues and parents/carers;
- follow safeguarding, confidentiality and data-protection requirements;
- report concerns, mistakes and incidents honestly;
- maintain appropriate supervision and ratios;
- avoid conduct that could reasonably be interpreted as humiliating, intimidating, discriminatory, sexualised or otherwise inappropriate;
- use physical contact only where appropriate to the child's care, comfort, development or safety;
- not form inappropriate private relationships with families through personal social-media or messaging accounts;
- not use personal devices in child areas;
- not attend work impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs or another substance;
- disclose information that may affect suitability to work with children.

Language and interaction

Shouting at children, sarcasm, ridicule, threats, degrading language, swearing at children, discussing adult matters in front of children or using discriminatory language is unacceptable.

Staff should be warm and affectionate where this is led by the child's needs and remains professionally appropriate. A child should never be pressured into physical affection.

One-to-one situations

One-to-one work and intimate care are normal parts of early years practice. Staff should work in ways that maintain appropriate visibility, accountability and safeguarding without compromising a child's dignity.

Gifts, money and relationships

Staff should avoid gifts, loans, private childcare arrangements or financial relationships with families that create a conflict of interest or blur professional boundaries. Any potential conflict should be discussed with the Manager.

Social media

Staff must not post confidential information, photographs of children, derogatory comments about the setting or content that could bring their professional suitability into question. Personal accounts should maintain appropriate privacy and professional boundaries.

Concerns about colleagues

Any concern about another adult's conduct must be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding or Whistleblowing Policy. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves or agree to keep them secret.

Parent and Carer Code of Conduct and Partnership Policy

Partnership

Footsteps values respectful, open partnership with parents and carers. Families have a right to ask questions, raise concerns and expect clear communication. Staff also have the right to work without abuse, intimidation or harassment.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- communicate respectfully with staff and other families;
- provide accurate and current contact, medical, dietary and safeguarding information;
- follow arrival, collection and security procedures;
- inform the setting of absences and significant changes affecting the child;
- respect confidentiality and not share images or information about other children;
- avoid photographing or filming children other than their own without permission;
- not use threatening, abusive, discriminatory or aggressive behaviour on the premises or online;
- raise concerns through the setting's complaints process rather than through public confrontation or social-media attacks.

Unacceptable conduct

Where a parent/carers behaviour presents a risk to children or staff, the Manager may end a meeting, require communication through specified channels, restrict access to the premises, seek police assistance or take other proportionate action. Any restriction will consider the child's welfare and the family's lawful rights.

Parental involvement

Parents/carers are encouraged to share information about their child's learning, interests, culture and wellbeing; attend consultations; contribute to transitions; and discuss concerns early. The setting will communicate significant changes to policies or practice where they affect families.

Missing Child Policy

Immediate action on the premises

If a child cannot be accounted for, staff will act immediately. The Manager or person in charge will coordinate the response while maintaining the safety of all other children.

Staff will:

- check the attendance register and confirm when and where the child was last seen;
- search the immediate premises, toilets, garden, storage and other accessible areas quickly and systematically;
- secure exits and ensure no other child can leave;
- maintain supervision and ratios for the remaining children;
- contact police promptly where the child is not immediately located or circumstances indicate risk;
- contact the child's parents/carers as soon as appropriate;
- preserve relevant information or CCTV if available.

Staff must not delay a police call in order to complete an exhaustive search where the circumstances indicate that the child may have left the setting.

Missing child on an outing

The group leader will immediately alert staff, identify the last known location, organise a safe local search without leaving other children inadequately supervised, contact venue security where applicable and call police promptly. Parents/carers and the Manager/provider will be informed.

After the event

The setting will record the incident, notify Ofsted and safeguarding agencies where required, cooperate with any investigation and complete a full review of security, supervision, staffing and risk assessment.

Support will be offered to the child, family and staff. The review will focus on learning and prevention as well as individual accountability where appropriate.

Student, Volunteer and Work-Experience Placement Policy

Purpose

Footsteps Preschool supports appropriate placements that contribute to learning while ensuring children's safety is never compromised.

Suitability and supervision

Students and volunteers will receive identity, suitability and DBS checks as required by their role and frequency of activity. The setting will comply with the current EYFS and regulated-activity rules when deciding what checks are required.

No student or volunteer whose suitability has not been appropriately checked will have unsupervised contact with children.

Students and volunteers will receive induction covering safeguarding, confidentiality, health and safety, emergency procedures, behaviour support, mobile phones and professional conduct.

Ratios

Students, long-term volunteers and apprentices will only be counted in ratios where the current EYFS permits this and the Manager is satisfied that the person is suitable, competent and responsible and meets the relevant qualification and paediatric-first-aid conditions.

Practice

Students and volunteers must:

- follow staff instructions and setting policies;
- maintain confidentiality;
- use no personal devices in child areas;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- remain within the scope of tasks agreed for their placement;
- not be left with responsibilities beyond their competence.

The setting may end a placement where conduct, attendance, competence or suitability gives cause for concern.

Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy

Statement

Footsteps Preschool will take reasonable steps to protect children, staff and visitors from fire and other emergencies. A separate site-specific fire risk assessment and emergency evacuation plan must be maintained and reviewed.

Arrangements

The setting will maintain:

- suitable fire-detection and warning systems;
- appropriate firefighting equipment;
- clearly identifiable and unobstructed escape routes and exits;
- emergency lighting where required;
- an assembly point;
- procedures for accounting for children, staff and visitors;
- personal emergency evacuation arrangements where someone needs additional support.

Fire doors and exits must not be wedged or obstructed in a way that compromises safety.

Evacuation

On discovering fire or another evacuation emergency, staff will raise the alarm, call 999 when required and evacuate children by the safest available route. Staff must not delay evacuation to collect personal belongings.

The person in charge will ensure the register, visitor information, essential emergency contacts and emergency medication are taken if this can be done without delaying evacuation. At the assembly point, the register will be checked and any missing person reported immediately to the emergency services.

No one may re-enter until the emergency services or authorised competent person confirms it is safe.

Drills

Emergency evacuation drills will be carried out regularly and recorded. Drills will be varied where practical so different staffing and attendance patterns are tested. Issues identified will result in prompt action.

Visitors, Contractors and Intruders Policy

Visitors

All visitors must be admitted by a member of staff, sign in where required and follow setting instructions. The setting will establish the visitor's identity and purpose and determine the level of supervision required.

Visitors must not have unsupervised access to children unless the setting has confirmed the necessary suitability checks and their role requires it.

Parents/carers visiting during sessions remain subject to safeguarding, confidentiality and device-use rules.

Contractors

Maintenance and contractor work will be planned to minimise risk to children. Higher-risk work should take place outside operating hours where reasonably practicable. Work areas, tools and substances must be secured from children.

Unknown or unauthorised person

Staff must not place themselves or children at unnecessary risk. If an unknown person enters or attempts to enter:

- children will be moved to a safe area as appropriate;
- a senior member of staff will challenge the person only where safe to do so;
- access points will be secured;
- police will be called if the person refuses to leave, behaves threateningly or creates a safety risk;
- the incident will be recorded and reviewed.

Security procedures must never prevent safe emergency evacuation.

Lockdown Policy

Purpose

Lockdown may be required where a threat outside or inside the premises makes evacuation less safe than remaining in a secure area. Examples could include a dangerous person nearby, police incident, environmental hazard or other security threat.

Procedure

The person in charge will decide whether to initiate lockdown, taking account of information from police or emergency services where available. Staff will:

- bring children inside or to the designated secure area where safe;
- secure doors and windows as appropriate without blocking emergency escape if circumstances change;
- maintain calm, age-appropriate reassurance;
- account for children, staff and visitors;
- silence unnecessary devices and communications where this improves safety;
- follow police or emergency-service instructions;
- contact parents only when doing so will not compromise safety or emergency communications.

No one will be released from lockdown until the person in charge or emergency services confirms it is safe.

After lockdown

The setting will record what occurred, review the response and provide support to children and staff. Parents/carers will be informed appropriately, while safeguarding or police restrictions on information are respected.

Emergency Closure and Extreme Weather Policy

Reasons for closure

Footsteps may need to close or alter operating hours because of severe weather, loss of utilities, flooding, heating failure, structural damage, infectious-disease advice, staff shortages affecting safe ratios, security incidents or other circumstances that make safe operation impossible.

Decision making

The Manager/provider will consider:

- whether the premises are safe and legally usable;
- staffing and qualified-person requirements;
- travel and local emergency advice;
- utilities, heating, water and sanitation;

- the needs of children with medical or additional needs;
- whether partial opening, delayed opening or early closure is safe and practical.

Parents/carers will be informed as quickly as possible through the setting's usual communication channels. Families must keep contact details current.

During an incident

If closure becomes necessary while children are present, staff will maintain supervision until each child is safely collected or another formally agreed safeguarding arrangement is made.

Fees or funding implications following closure will be dealt with under the parent contract, provider agreement and current funding rules rather than decided informally during the incident.

Outdoor Play and Forest School Policy

Principle

Outdoor learning is a core part of Footsteps Preschool's curriculum. Children will have daily access to outdoor play where possible, in line with the EYFS, and will experience appropriate challenge, nature, movement and managed risk.

Safety

Outdoor areas will be checked before use and monitored throughout the session. Staff will consider gates and boundaries, surfaces, weather, sun exposure, water, plants, animal waste, tools, climbing and wheeled toys.

Children will be dressed appropriately for weather as far as reasonably practicable. Outdoor play will not automatically be cancelled because of rain or cold, but staff will modify or stop activities where weather creates an unacceptable risk.

Forest School

Forest School experiences will be led in accordance with the competence and training of staff and a suitable risk-benefit assessment. Depending on activities, controls may include boundaries, tool procedures, fire safety, handwashing, identification of hazardous plants, first aid and emergency communication.

Tools will be introduced progressively and used only with appropriate adult supervision. Fire will only be used where there is a specific risk assessment, competent leadership and safe extinguishing arrangements.

Children will be encouraged to assess manageable risk, solve problems, care for living things and develop confidence rather than being prevented from engaging in meaningful challenge.

Sustainability Policy

Sustainability lead

Sustainability Lead: Toni Harrison

Aim

Footsteps Preschool aims to reduce avoidable waste, model care for the environment and help children develop a positive relationship with the natural world.

The setting will, where practical:

- reduce unnecessary single-use materials;
- recycle in line with local arrangements;
- reuse safe resources creatively;
- minimise avoidable food and paper waste;
- use digital communication where this is appropriate and accessible;
- choose durable, repairable and responsibly sourced resources where reasonably possible;
- conserve water and energy without compromising children's health and safety;
- involve children in gardening, nature care and age-appropriate environmental projects.

Sustainability decisions will not override safeguarding, hygiene, allergy, food-safety or health-and-safety requirements.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Children

Footsteps Preschool recognises that emotional wellbeing is central to learning and development. Children benefit from secure relationships, predictable routines, play, movement, communication and adults who respond sensitively to distress.

Staff will support wellbeing by:

- building secure, respectful relationships;
- helping children name and understand emotions;
- providing co-regulation and calm spaces without using isolation as punishment;
- supporting friendships and belonging;
- noticing changes in behaviour, sleep, appetite, communication or engagement;
- responding to developmental, SEND and sensory needs;
- working with parents/carers and outside professionals where concerns persist.

Mental-health concerns may also be safeguarding concerns. Staff must report any indication that a child may be experiencing harm, trauma or significant emotional distress to the DSL.

Staff

The setting recognises that staff wellbeing affects safe and effective practice. Managers will seek to provide supportive supervision, reasonable workload management, appropriate breaks, clear expectations and opportunities to raise concerns.

Staff are encouraged to seek help early if stress, health, medication or personal circumstances may affect their ability to work safely. Confidentiality will be respected, subject to safeguarding and health-and-safety duties.

Managers will address bullying, harassment, discrimination and unreasonable conduct promptly. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled staff in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Families

Parents/carers may approach the setting for support or signposting. Staff will listen within the limits of their professional role and will not attempt to provide therapy or medical advice. Information will remain confidential unless safeguarding or another legal duty requires sharing.

Named Wellbeing Officer: Danielle Lapworth

Early Education Funding and Entitlements Policy

Statement

Footsteps Preschool participates in funded early education and childcare in accordance with current national guidance and its agreement with Hampshire County Council. Eligibility, age ranges and funding arrangements can change; the current statutory guidance and local provider agreement take precedence over older terminology in historical policies.

Entitlements

Depending on the child's age and family circumstances, current entitlements may include:

- the universal 15-hour entitlement for all eligible three- and four-year-olds;
- the 15-hour Early Learning for eligible two-year-olds receiving additional forms of support;
- the working-parent entitlement of up to 30 hours a week for eligible children from the term after they turn 9 months until they start school, subject to current eligibility and reconfirmation rules.

Footsteps will offer funded places only within the age range it is registered and staffed to provide and subject to available sessions.

Free access to entitlement hours

Funded entitlement hours must be delivered free of mandatory charges. The setting will not require a parent to pay a top-up fee or compulsory general charge in order to access funded hours.

Chargeable extras such as meals, snacks, optional consumables, optional activities and additional private hours will be clearly identified and itemised. Parents must be able to opt out of voluntary extras, and a reasonable alternative must be available so that the funded place remains accessible free of charge.

Invoices and transparency

Invoices will distinguish, where applicable, funded hours from private hours and from food, consumable or activity charges. Current charges and the pattern in which funded hours can be taken will be made clear to parents.

Eligibility and declarations

Parents/carers are responsible for providing accurate information and eligibility codes where required. The setting will complete the relevant parental declaration and claim funding in accordance with Hampshire processes. Where funding is split with another provider, families should inform all settings promptly.

SEND funding

No additional charge will be made as a condition of a child with SEND accessing funded entitlement hours. The setting will seek appropriate Disability Access Fund, SEND Inclusion Fund or other support where eligible.

Named Persons and Key Responsibilities

The following named roles reflect the information in the source handbook and the October 2026 review. They must be updated promptly when staffing or responsibilities change.

Preschool Manager: Danielle Lapworth

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Danielle Lapworth

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Niamh Rowell

Health and Safety Lead: Danielle Lapworth

Lead SENDCo: Danielle Lapworth

Secondary SENDCo support: Abbie Howard

Named Person for Self-Regulation and Supporting Behaviour: Danielle Lapworth

Fire Warden / Fire Safety Lead: Danielle Lapworth

Wellbeing Officer: Danielle Lapworth

Sustainability Lead: Toni Harrison

Where a named person is absent, the Manager/provider will ensure a competent person is designated to carry out any duty that must still be fulfilled. Statutory responsibilities do not cease because a named person is unavailable.

Key External Contacts

Emergency services: 999

Police non-emergency: 101

Hampshire Children's Services public line: 0300 555 1384

Hampshire Children's Services out of hours: 0300 555 1373

Hampshire professionals urgent child-protection line: 01329 225379

Hampshire LADO referral email where directed by the current process: LADO@hants.gov.uk

Ofsted concerns about childcare: 0300 123 4666

Ofsted general enquiries: 0300 123 1231

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: 0800 028 0285

Childline: 0800 1111

These contact details should be checked as part of the annual safeguarding review and after any notification from the relevant agency.

Key Legislation and Guidance

This handbook has been reviewed with reference to the following key sources current at October 2026. This is not an exhaustive list and the latest version should always be used.

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, dated 13 July 2026 and effective 1 September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People, statutory guidance updated September 2026, including the information-sharing duty effective 30 September 2026.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, as amended.
- Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare Act 2016.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and current Prevent duty guidance.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, Serious Crime Act 2015 and multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended, and current DBS regulated-activity requirements.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Early Education and Childcare statutory guidance valid from 1 April 2026.
- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance.
- UK Health Security Agency health-protection guidance for children and young people's settings, including current public-health exclusion periods.
- Current Hampshire safeguarding and allegations-management procedures.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 is statutory for schools and colleges, not for Footsteps Preschool as a standalone private/voluntary/independent early years setting. It may be consulted as useful supporting guidance where relevant, but the setting's primary statutory safeguarding framework is the EYFS together with Working Together to Safeguard Children and applicable local procedures.

Policy Review and Staff Acknowledgement

Review

The Manager and provider will review this handbook at least annually. A policy will be reviewed sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
- Ofsted or the local authority issues relevant updated requirements;
- a serious incident, complaint or safeguarding case identifies a need for change;
- the premises, staffing structure or services change significantly;
- monitoring shows that a procedure is unclear or ineffective.

Changes that materially affect staff practice will be communicated and, where necessary, supported by training or supervision. Changes that materially affect parents/carers will be communicated through appropriate setting channels.

Staff acknowledgement

I confirm that I have been given access to the Footsteps Preschool Policies and Procedures 2026 handbook, understand that I am responsible for following the policies relevant to my role, and know that I must seek clarification if I am unsure how a policy applies.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Manager/Verifier: _____