

Policies and Procedures



1st Step Pre-school Ltd

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1st Step Pre-school Ltd

1. Organisation: Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the highest quality, child-centred care and education of children that is, holistic and values all children as individuals. To provide a caring, warm and safe environment which fosters children's creativity and imagination and embraces their natural desires to explore, play and learn. To provide highly trained, motivated and passionate staff who inspire, excite and nurture children. To stimulate a child's learning abilities through encouragement and imaginative play and build and maintain positive relationships with parents and carers.

MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Research suggests that from the age of two children's intelligence is at its greatest, some skills cannot be learned nearly as well after this first critical period of brain development, it is argued they may even be the most intelligent humans on the planet! Through extensive training and the very best team we believe we have what it takes to enable your child to progress, develop and thrive both physically and emotionally through the use of educational and imaginative play. At 1st Step we strive to nurture, guide and encourage every child to learn, to grow and to reach their full potential by child-lead play and high scope learning in a safe and positive environment. As well as being parents and grandparents we have hundreds of years' experience in working with children. We know how precious every child is and we also appreciate how important every parent and carer is to their child. As an important partner in your child's education, you will receive daily reports to outline your child's individual progress and we welcome and encourage your feedback. Choosing the right pre-school for your little one is a big decision and that is why we strive to make 1st Step a 'home from home' for your child. By developing positive relationships and excellent lines of communication between us we hope to give all parents/carers confidence and peace of mind when leaving their child in our care. Your child/ren is your most treasured possession and they will be ours too...Let their **1st Step** be in the right direction!

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

1a. Organisation: Opening and Closures and Settling in Procedures

Opening and Closure

1st Step Pre-school Ltd will operate during the following hours:

7:30am till 5:00pm all year round

We are closed for Bank Holidays and cease operation over the Christmas period (See Management team for opening dates)

In line with Ofsted requirements and to ensure the safety and security of the nursery, a qualified Level 3 educator will be responsible for opening and closing the building each day. This ensures that a suitably experienced staff member is present to conduct essential safety checks, secure the premises, and oversee the arrival and departure of children, staff, and visitors. Access to the building will not be allowed outside of opening hours. However, each setting has a contact number to take messages outside of opening hours.

If **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** has to close early or for an unexpected reason (ie for minor occurrences such as a power cut, water failure etc), parents will be contacted by telephone as soon as possible. A message will be sent out on our social media informing of the closure and the possible re-opening times. Ofsted will be informed of the unexpected closure.

Settling in Procedures

Starting nursery, moving room, changing settings or beginning school can be exciting yet challenging for children and their parents/guardians. At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we prioritise the child's needs and collaborate with parents and professionals to ensure smooth transitions.

Starting Nursery:

We ease the transition by discussing the child's routine with parents beforehand. Free 'Stay & play' sessions allow children to visit, meet staff, and familiarise themselves with the setting.

Transition to Another Setting:

When children move to a new setting, we ensure their Learning Journal and records are up-to-date and shared. With parental permission, we can also communicate directly with the new setting to provide additional information.

Transition to School:

We co-ordinate with schools to discuss improvements, upcoming events, and relevant details. Parents are encouraged to take children to school transition days in the summer term. Reception teachers can request a visit to the nursery to discuss transitioning children, ensuring continuity of learning. Learning journals and records are completed and shared with parents and schools.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

1b. Parent / Carer Policy

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we believe effective partnerships with parents/carers are essential for high-quality care and supporting children's development. We value parents/carers as primary caregivers and their insights about their children. This policy outlines our commitment to open communication, collaboration, and involving parents/carers in their child's care.

Open Communication:

We maintain regular, open communication through face-to-face discussions, phone calls, emails, and messages to keep parents/carers informed about their child's progress and daily experiences.

Information Sharing:

We use information provided by parents/carers about routines, preferences, and needs to tailor care and activities. With consent, we share progress and milestones, respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Participating in Care and Decision-making:

We encourage parents/carers to actively participate in care decisions, setting goals, and planning strategies for their child's learning and development.

Parent/Carer Meetings:

Regular formal and informal meetings are offered to discuss progress, address concerns, and review goals. Meetings can be scheduled as/when needed.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

All information shared by parents/carers is treated confidentially. Personal records are securely stored and accessible only to authorised staff.

Involvement in Activities and Events:

We invite parents/carers to participate in activities and events, contributing to skills or cultural knowledge to enrich the learning environment.

Feedback and Suggestions:

We value feedback and encourage parents/carers to share suggestions or concerns. Regular surveys help us improve our services.

Collaborating with External professionals:

We work with external professionals (e.g. therapists, educators) and parents/carers to support children's individual needs, ensuring coordinated care.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

1c. Learning and Development

Keyworkers

‘A key person approach is a way to ensure that all children and families have one or more persons within the setting with whom they have a special, nurturing relationship. The presence of a key person helps the child to feel emotionally secure when away from home and provides a reassuring point of contact for parents.’

Attachment and the role of the key person – birth to 5 matters

Every child will be provided with a Keyworker (a named member of staff) who will support their development and tailor their learning and care to meet their individual needs during their time at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**. The number of children allocated to each Keyworker will depend on staff hours and availability. As the child is introduced to all staff during their settling in period, if their Keyworker is absent, the child should feel confident to approach another member of staff. If a staff member leaves, the child will be allocated a new keyworker. Keyworkers have access to all records ie registration forms, about the individual child's needs. The Keyworker will introduce themselves to the parents/carers. Regular communication will take place between the keyworker, parent/carer and the child; this will be in the form of written or verbal communication. Observations will be carried out weekly and uploaded to Tapestry including photographs, drawings, comments from home and interests followed at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**. Parents/carers will have access to their child's journal and will be encouraged to contribute towards their development and learning. If parents wish to discuss issues or their child's progress, a designated meeting can be arranged at their convenience. Meetings/liaisons will take place between early years educators to discuss any relevant information and keyworkers will also have the opportunity to attend training, when needed.

Learning Environment/ / Activities

"My role is to ensure the very best conditions for children to learn, that the resources they can access are relevant and allow a degree of choice and that the environments they inhabit allow their learning to flourish."

DFE – Ofsted raising standards improving lives

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are committed to providing high-quality care, learning, and play experiences that support each child's holistic development. This policy outlines our approach to creating a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can thrive.

We support children's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and creative development through tailored activities that meet their individual needs and interests. Play is central to our approach, fostering curiosity, exploration, problem-solving, and creativity through play-based learning integrated into daily routines. All activities are age-appropriate, designed to align with each child's developmental stage, abilities, and interests, ensuring a varied and engaging programme.

Our setting provides a safe, stimulating space that encourages curiosity and discovery, with carefully selected resources to support learning and play. Regular observations and assessments are conducted to track progress and inform individualised learning plans, with parental involvement where appropriate. Clear, flexible learning goals are set for each child, based on their age, interests, and developmental needs, with plans adapted as they progress.

We are committed to inclusivity, ensuring all children, regardless of abilities or backgrounds, can participate in activities and experiences. Outdoor play is a key part of our programme, offering safe, well-maintained spaces for physical activities, nature exploration, and gross motor skill development. We also encourage creative expression through art, crafts, and imaginative play, with materials readily available for children to explore.

To ensure continuous improvement, we seek feedback from staff, parents/carers, and external agencies to enhance our practices. Regular training and professional development are provided to staff, ensuring they deliver high-quality care and learning experiences.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

1d. Ofsted

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is registered with Ofsted as a childcare provider on the Early years Register and on the Compulsory Part of the childcare Register. As **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** operates across different sites, each site has their own unique number with Ofsted. Listed below are the unique Ofsted numbers connected with each site:

1st Step Pre-school Ltd Blyth: 2681818

1st Step Pre-school Ltd Seaton Delaval: 2753852

1st Step Pre-school Ltd @ Mowbray: 2797161

Ofsted ensures that **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** is effective, safely managed and ensures the quality is underpinned in the promotion of the welfare and care of all children. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** meets Ofsted standards by putting into place Policies and Procedures, adhering to these and promoting the good practice at all times. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** is regularly inspected by Ofsted and copies of the inspection reports can be found on the company's website (www.1ststeppreschool.co.uk). During an inspection, an inspector may wish to speak with staff, parents and the children about **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**: questionnaires may need to be completed by parents/carers prior to an inspection. The manager will provide Ofsted, if requested, a written record of all complaints made during any specific period, and the action taken as a result of each complaint. If a complaint is against a member of staff then Ofsted will be notified orally within 24 hours and in writing within 3 working days by the manager. Staff, parents or visitors can contact Ofsted at any time at the following address (displayed at each site).

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel. 0300 123 1231

1st Step Pre-school Ltd will contact Ofsted of any changes, including the following:

- Changes of address of the premises
- Change of opening hours
- Change of management
- Change to the name or registered number
- Change of director/s
- Changes to the premises, indoor and outdoors
- Any significant events which affect the suitability of the provider or any person who cares for children on the premises
- Any unexpected closures
- If a child is lost/missing

- If any serious* accident, illness or death of a child (or someone on the premises) occurs whilst at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** and the action taken (including hospitalisation for more than 24 hours)
- Allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) and the action taken in respect of these allegations
- Food poisoning incidents of two or more children
- If Social Services or Police are involved when a child has not been collected from **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**
- Details of any order, determination, conviction or the ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006
- The date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose.
- The body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed.
- A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction)

1st Step Pre-school Ltd will notify Ofsted within 14 days of the above, when reasonably practicable.

***1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will refer to the **EYFS Framework** (updated September 2023)

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

2. Documentation:

1st Step Pre-school Ltd will maintain up-to-date records of all children attending including names, addresses, dates of birth, emergency information; this is obtained purely for use by the staff. These records will be kept for at least 3 years after the child has left the nursery and then be shredded.

This written information must be obtained before a child starts at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**. This form is renewed annually in **September** and allows parents to make any amendments. The form needs to be returned to **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** before further bookings can be accepted. This information will be stored confidentially and in a locked cabinet. Parents will be given a welcome pack which gives full details of times and costs prior to completing a Registration Form. Up to 2 emergency contact numbers must be provided unique to any other contacts previously provided on the form in the instance that parents/carers are un-contactable. The nominated people must be able to look after the children at short notice, if necessary. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will also maintain up to date records of staffing and directors. All confidential documents will be kept in a locked cabinet.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is registered with Ofsted:

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And an up-to-date certificate will be displayed on the noticeboard (and will be shown to parents on request)

A daily register of the children attending will be held on Tapestry and in the event of electrical failure a paper copy will be maintained. Children will be registered on the time of their arrival. When the children are collected the parents will be given a breakdown of their child's day and sign any relevant forms. On occasions when collection is to be made by someone other than an identified person, the parents/carers must provide them with a unique password created by the parent/carer on their registration form. If at all possible, the child should be told by parents who is collecting. Staff starting/departure times will be recorded on Tapestry.

Admissions Policy

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is committed to providing high-quality early years education and childcare for children from birth to 5 years old. We aim to ensure that our admissions process is fair, transparent, and in line with relevant statutory requirements, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Ofsted regulations.

Admission places at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will be allocated based on the following criteria:

- Availability of places within the relevant age group
- The child's age and development needs
- Sibling priority (children with siblings already attending the nursery will be given preference)
- Children eligible for government-funded childcare places (such as the 15 and 30-hours free entitlement for eligible 2,3, and 4-year-olds)
- Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) where we can meet the child's needs in line with our SEND policy.
- The date of application

Application Process

- Parents/carers are required to complete an application form and provide relevant supporting documentation (e.g., birth certificate, proof of address).
- A waiting list may be operated when places are full. Priority will be given according to the admission criteria.
- Parents/carers will be notified regarding the outcome of their application.
- A non-refundable registration fee may be required upon acceptance of a place.

Compliance with Ofsted and EYFS requirements

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is registered with Ofsted and complies with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. The nursery ensures staff ratios meet EYFS guidelines (1:3 for under 2s, 1:5 for 2-year-olds, and 1:8 for 3-5-year-olds). Safeguarding and welfare requirements are strictly adhered to, including staff qualifications, DBS checks, and paediatric first aid training. Regular inspections by Ofsted ensure compliance with quality standards.

Equal Opportunities

- We are committed to promoting an inclusive and diverse environment.
- No child will be discriminated against based on race, gender, religion, disability, or background.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate children with additional needs.

Vacancies, waiting Lists & Advertising

If a place is not available, then children will be placed on a waiting list. These waiting lists will be referred to as a place becomes available, using a first come first served basis. Parents/carers will be contacted by either the setting or business manager.

Confirmation of a place

If a child is offered a place, either the setting or business manager will contact the parent/carer via telephone. The child's name will be added to the relevant daily lists.

Cancellation of a place

The nursery reserves the right to withdraw a place if fees remain unpaid, policies are breached, or if the child's needs cannot be met within our provision. Parents are required to give a notice period (cancellation needs to be given in writing with 4 weeks' notice) if they wish to withdraw their child from the nursery.

Visitors

Whenever possible, all visits must be pre-booked in advance. Upon arrival, all visitors—regardless of the site they are visiting—must report to the main entrance of **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** and sign in using the visitors' book. The manager or lead educator will inform staff of any visitors. Each visitor will receive an identification badge to wear while on the premises and will be escorted by a staff member upon arrival and departure. Visitors will never be left unsupervised. Copies of policies and procedures are available upon request, either as a hard copy or via email.

Names, address and purpose of visit will be recorded in the visitor book; this will be kept in the setting at all times in a locked cabinet.

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2a. Payment, Fees and Funding:

The nursery policy is that all fees are paid monthly in advance on the first day of the month. Our preference is for payments to be made by direct debit/standing order. Additional sessions can be paid on receipt of invoice.

The nursery recognises that there may be circumstances where parents face problems in meeting fees. Where you feel there may be a problem, please alert the nursery manager and discuss the matter. We will endeavour to find a way around such problems and it is therefore of paramount importance that the nursery is kept fully informed of any difficulty in meeting fees, rather than allow arrears to accrue. If fees go unpaid then the nursery place will be suspended until full payment has been made.

Nursery fees will not be refunded if a child is ill or on holiday.

If you are applying to use Government Free Funded Entitlement then please ensure you complete the relevant form. We must receive your child's code prior to starting Nursery.

Four weeks' notice in writing is required to let us know of any changes to your child's regular schedule or to terminate their contract.

If your child's fees are one month in arrears, you will receive a letter with the amount due and date by which payment must be made. If payment is not received by this date the nursery reserves the right to suspend your child until the account is settled.

Funded places

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we recognise the importance of providing access to funded early education for eligible children. We adhere to the eligibility criteria set by the local authority and ensure that parents or legal guardians are informed about their child's entitlement and the number of funded hours available. Funded hours will be offered in line with the local authority's funding arrangements and provided during our normal operating hours. To support flexibility, we work closely with parents to determine the best use of funded hours to suit their child's needs and family circumstances, including the option to split hours between multiple providers. Parents will be required to complete the necessary registration and enrolment forms, with our staff available to assist in the process. We maintain accurate attendance records for all children accessing funded hours, which are submitted to the local authority or relevant funding body for verification and funding allocation purposes.

The nursery will offer funded places for particular children as identified by the Local Authority. The nursery will follow the Local Authority Code of Practice in relation to funded places.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3. Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare:

Our first responsibility and priority is the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care. If we have any cause for concern, we will report it to the relevant bodies.

Parents/carers must notify us of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents, injuries, or changes in circumstances which may affect the child. We will record any details necessary and ask a parent/carer to sign that they have seen our notes.

The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Any children attending our nursery who are currently involved with outside agencies, including social workers, speech therapists etc, we will ensure continued contact with the professionals involved to guarantee the best possible support for each child.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

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

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** we will work with our children, parents, and external agencies to ensure the welfare and safety of the children and give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from abuse in whatever form.

To ensure this we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children

Our nursery has a clear commitment to protect promoting welfare. If anyone believes that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the DSL, Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager at the earliest opportunity.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead/s will endeavour to keep up to date with any current information about safeguarding and child protection and will update policies and procedures accordingly to include any changes. Relevant training and qualifications will be renewed at least every two years.

Our staff have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care, we provide, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first person a child will confide in about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

These are the procedures which will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. Our responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents, and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e., bullying, and discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review this policy with staff and parents/carers, where appropriate
- Ensure that all staff are trained to recognise signs of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

Types of Abuse:

Our staff understand that child abuse can be classified as physical, sexual, emotional or neglect, and can also be a combination of these, and we are aware of the signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse is occurring.

Abuse and neglect are all forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them or by failing to act to prevent harm to them. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child, or children.

Physical Abuse:

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. The symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g., fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles, and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries - these will also be logged on an Existing Injuries Form and staff will discuss this with the parent/carer.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the DSL, Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.

Procedure:

- All signs or marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at nursery, will be recorded on an Existing Injury or Accident Forms as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity
- Such discussions will be recorded on the Existing Injury/Accident Forms and 3 copies will be made: a copy for the parent/carer, a copy will be put in the child's file and a copy in the setting folder for audit purposes.
- If there are any queries/suspicions regarding the injury, the staff have a duty of care to report this to Onecall

Fabricated Illness:

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g., through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through

false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual Abuse:

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed e.g., for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruising between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease. Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms are not signs and should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSL, Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager
- The matter will be referred to Onecall and/or the Police

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- Show that we have heard what they are saying, and that we take their allegations seriously
- Encourage the child to talk, without prompting them or asking them leading questions. We will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account
- Reassure the child that they can tell us anything that is worrying them, but that we cannot promise not to tell anybody because some things must be passed on in order to keep them safe
- Explain what actions we must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child

- Record what we have been told, as soon as we can, using the child's exact words where possible
- Make a note of the date, time, place, and people who were present during the disclosure

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation.

Emotional Abuse:

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the DSL, Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to such records
- An Early Help Assessment may need to be completed
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the matter will be referred to Onecall

Neglect:

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development including failure to thrive.)

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small, (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them) arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough food for the child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs e.g., a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parents will have access to such records
- An Early Help Assessment may have to be completed
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the matter will be referred to Onecall

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons. It is a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In circumstances where FGM is practised on a

child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity as well as their right to health. The UK government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM including the convention on the rights of the child.

Girls are particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM.

Indications that FGM has taken place include:

- Long absence from nursery
- Noticeable behaviour changes especially after return from holiday

Procedure:

The appropriate response to FGM is to follow usual child protection procedures which must ensure immediate protection and support for the child.

Where a child under 18 years and has undergone FGM staff will report this immediately to the Police and Onecall.

If a child under 18 years discloses to a member of staff that they have undergone FGM or where physical signs indicate FGM has been carried out, there is a mandatory duty to report it to the Police.

It is the personal duty of that member of staff to report it to Police and cannot be passed on or delegated to another member of staff.

The member of staff will tell the police:

- They are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty
- They will give their name, place of work, their role, work telephone number e-mail address and times they will be available to be called back
- They will give the Police the girl's details including name, age, date of birth and address
- Always ensure you are given a reference number from the Police

In cases of FGM, the child will not be returned to the care of parents/carer by the nursery.

Indicators of Child Abuse:

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures:

Staff should make an objective record supported by the Manager or Deputy Manager of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name

- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen, for example bruising, what the child said and who was present
- Details of any previous concerns
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person whom the concern was reported, with date and time, and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any action taken such as discussion held with the parent(s) any explanations from the parents/carers (if we feel it is safe to discuss the matter with them).

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation.

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL/Manager/Deputy Manager, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse, it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly, and disclosure is not forced, or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after this disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that, through discussion with all concerned, the matter needs to be raised with Onecall, Ofsted, the Police and/or an Early Help Assessment needs to be initiated.

Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information or concerns they have with regards to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to cooperate with Onecall, Ofsted and the Police in anyway necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

County Lines:

This is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs from big cities into smaller towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.' Customers will live in a different area to where the

dealers and networks are based, so drug runners are needed to transport the drugs and collect payment.

Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes, and care homes.

Signs and indicators to be aware of include:

- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g., clothes, jewellery, cars etc.)
- Missing from home or schools and/or significant decline in performance
- New friends or relationships with those who do not share any mutual friendships with the victim or anyone else
- May be carrying a weapon
- Receiving more texts or calls than usual
- Sudden influx of cash, clothes, or mobile phones
- Unexplained injuries
- Significant changes in emotional well-being
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.

Cuckooing:

Cuckooing is a form of county lines crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to criminally exploit them as a base for drug dealing, often in multi-occupancy or social housing properties.

Signs that this is happening in a family property may be an increase in people entering or leaving the property, an increase in cars or bikes outside the home; windows

covered or curtains closed for lengthy periods, family not being seen for extended periods; signs of drug use or an increase in anti-social behaviour at the home.

If staff have any concerns regarding county lines/ cuckooing they will be reported to the DSL, (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL) Onecall and/or the Police.

If appropriate, any concerns or incidents will be discussed with the parent/ carer, such discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.

Contact will be made with Onecall to report concerns and seek advice immediately or as soon as it is practicable to do so. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the Police.

Witchcraft:

It includes concepts of: witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs) the evil eye, djinns (traditionally known in Islamic faith contexts) or dakini (in the Hindu context) rituals where child murder is believed to bring supernatural benefits or medicinal remedies, use of

magic/witchcraft to create fear and compliance, especially with child sexual exploitation, children treated as a scapegoat for perceived failure, e.g. bringing misfortune or bad spirits into the home.

If staff have concerns about a child, they will dismiss any personal worries about upsetting a family or disrespecting a certain culture. Their concerns will be reported to the DSL, (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL) Onecall and/or the Police.

If appropriate, any concerns or incidents will be discussed with the parent/ carer, such discussions will be recorded. Parents will have access to these records on request in line with GDPR and data protection guidelines.

Contact will be made with Onecall to report concerns and seek advice immediately or as soon as it is practicable to do so. If it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the Police.

Staffing and Volunteering:

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will, therefore, not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance (DBS)

All staff will attend safeguarding/child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for

spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and coordinates child protection and welfare issues.

Our Company DSL is: **Ryan McMillan** Supported by DSL trained staff at each site.

All members of staff undertake specific training and receive regular updates of developments within this field.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We recheck the suitability of all adults working or volunteering with children including anything in their private life or medical background that may affect their suitability to care for children
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive at least two written references before a new member of staff commences employment with us
- Volunteers including students do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act with respect to any person who was dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concerns
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and to take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All staff have access to a Whistle Blowing Policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss safeguarding/child protection training and any needs for further support
- Deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support.

Informing Parents/Carers:

Parents/carers are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded parents/carers are informed at the same time as the report is made except where the guidance of Onecall does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure in these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality:

All suspicions inquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Information is shared under the guidance of Onecall.

Support to families:

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships among our families, staff and volunteers within the nursery.

The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents/carers and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child or shared with the child's parents/carers, or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of Onecall and with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child and their family.

Employees or volunteers of the nursery:

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the below procedure:

The allegation should be reported to the DSL, Manager or Deputy Manager. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the registered owner.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Ofsted and Onecall will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly.

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals the LADO, Ofsted, Onecall to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted and Onecall and asks all staff members to do the same and cooperate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice

- The nursery reserves the right to suspend (without prejudice) any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries, external investigations and interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (Police) and would result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery is also required to notify the DBS to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years whichever is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for reference and future DBS check and avoid any unnecessary re-investigation
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and parents/carers

Prevent Duty:

The Prevent Duty was published in 2015 and it identifies the duty of care that all early years practitioners must be vigilant in order to help to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism.

In order for us to fulfil the Prevent Duty, it is essential that we are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do if they are identified. Protecting children from risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of childminders' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other abuse, whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

We understand that there is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with all safeguarding issues, we will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. We are aware that any child, from any background, can be the victim of radicalisation and as such, will report any concerns about a child. We will not discriminate based on the colour of their skin, their social class, their cultural background or any other such factors. All concerns will be passed on to Children's Services.

British Values:

The Prevent Duty Guidance defines British values as “democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.”

All nurseries in England are required to promote British values in their settings, through activities focused on Personal, Social and Emotional Development, as well as Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

By taking part in these kinds of activities, children will hopefully build their resilience to radicalisation and gain the confidence to challenge extremist views in later life.

We will provide suitable, age-appropriate opportunities which encourage children to respect each other's views, beliefs, and values, to understand that their opinions count, and to talk about their feelings. Activities will involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration. Children will be encouraged to understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences. They will have an input in creating rules and codes of behaviour for the setting. An ethos of total acceptance of all views, faiths, cultures, and races will be created, where children will appreciate and respect their own and others' cultures.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger contact the Police	999
Local Police Station:	101
Non-emergency Onecall	(01670) 536400
14+ Team Mon-Thurs 8:30-5:00	(01670) 622930
Out of hours	0345 6005252
Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:	0808 800 5000
Kidscape	02078 235430

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3a. Confidentiality: Retention periods of records

1st Step Pre-school Ltd recognises the importance of confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 2018 and The Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Information will be stored either on paper or on computers, where it is password protected. All paper information will be kept in a locked cabinet and viewed by those who have a right or professional need to see them. Paper records will be shredded after the recommended length of time. ICT information will be deleted after the recommended length of time. The director/s and site manager/s will ensure this is carried out and will keep staff informed of any changes. A confidentiality agreement will be signed by all staff and directors when they have read and understood all of the Policies and Procedures (or receive any updates). See Policy 3b for Secure storage, Handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information.

A separate room can be available for confidential discussions to take place at a parent/carer or professional body request.

The table on the following pages indicate the records/documents that the Pre-school hold, retention periods, who has access to the records and the Authority for the records. See also Policy 3o Data Protection Policy.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3b. Secure storage, Handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage and retention and disposal of Disclosure information, including GDPR May 2018.

Storage and Access

Disclosure information will be kept securely, in a lockable, filing cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is necessary, no longer than 6 months. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means eg by shredding. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (eg waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken. See also Policy 3a Confidentiality.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3c. Complaints Procedure

As a child care setting, we aim to work in close partnership with all parents/guardians to meet the needs of their children. We recognise that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time, and we are committed to addressing them promptly, fairly, and confidentially. This policy outlines our procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints or grievances in a transparent and respectful manner. If there is any aspect of our service that does not meet your expectations, we are happy to discuss this with you. If you feel comfortable communicating this verbally, we can hopefully resolve the issue right away.

If you would prefer to make a complaint in writing, you can send this to our email address: firststeppreschool@yahoo.com or by post to: **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**

Unit 9d, Cowley Road

Riverside Business Park

BLYTH

Northumberland

NE24 5TF

Open Communication:

- We encourage open and honest communication with parents, staff members, providing multiple channels for sharing concerns, feedback, or complaints.
- We value feedback and see it as an opportunity for improvement, ensuring that concerns are treated seriously and addressed promptly.

Receipt of Complaints:

- We provide clear information to parents on how to raise concerns or submit a complaint.
- Complaints may be submitted in writing, by email, or through face-to-face discussions, ensuring that confidentiality and privacy are respected.

Handling Complaints:

- All complaints are acknowledged promptly, usually within 48 hours of receipt, to confirm that the complaint is being addressed.
- Complaints are handled in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner, respecting the rights and privacy of all parties involved.

- We maintain a record of all complaints, including relevant details, actions taken, and outcomes.

We will record the following information:

- the name of the person making the complaint
- the EYFS requirement to which the complaint relates
- the nature of the complaint
- the date/time of the complaint
- any action taken in response to the complaint
- the outcome of the complaint investigation
- details of the information and findings that were given to the person making the complaint, including any action taken

Investigation and Resolution:

- Complaints are thoroughly and impartially investigated, ensuring that all relevant information is gathered and considered.
- We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, typically within 28 working days from the receipt of the complaint.
- During the investigation, we may seek additional information from relevant parties, interview witnesses, or review relevant records or documentation.
- Once the investigation is complete, we will communicate the findings and proposed resolution to the complainant in writing, ensuring transparency and clear explanation.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

- All complaints and related information are treated with strict confidentiality, shared only with individuals directly involved in the investigation and resolution process.
- Information will be shared with third parties only if necessary for the investigation or resolution, and with the explicit consent of the complainant.

Appeals Process:

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or resolution proposed, they may request a review or appeal.

- Appeals should be made in writing, clearly stating the reasons for the appeal and any additional information or evidence to support their case.
- Appeals will be reviewed by an independent person or an appointed representative not previously involved in the complaint.
- The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing, providing a final resolution to the complaint.

Monitoring and Learning:

- We monitor and review all complaints to identify any recurring issues or areas for improvement in our practices.
- We take complaints seriously and use them as an opportunity for reflection, learning, and enhancing the quality of our childcare provision.

If we cannot resolve an issue between ourselves and you wish to make a formal complaint then you can contact the Ofsted Complaints and Investigation Unit on 03001231231 or you can write to them at Applications, Regulatory and Contact Team, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

We will keep a written record of complaints and their outcomes for at least three years.

Review and Monitoring:

This policy is reviewed annually or more frequently if required, to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with any changes in legislation or local guidelines. We welcome feedback from staff, parents, and external agencies to continuously improve our complaints and grievances handling practices.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3d. Health and Safety:

Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments have been carried out for all areas and equipment, both indoors and outdoors. The assessments are available to view upon request. The nursery's aim is to minimise the hazards and risks to the children, parents/guardians and staff, to enable the children to thrive in a healthy, safe environment.

Daily inspection

The nursery has designated members of staff whose responsibilities include implementing a daily safety inspection before the nursery opens. This consists of checking the cleanliness of the setting, as well as checking for hazards and risks within the inside and outside environment.

No Smoking

The nursery has a strict No Smoking policy. If you wish to smoke (including e-cigarettes) please vacate the nursery grounds. If you would like advice or support to quit smoking, please speak to nursery management.

Electrical

All electrical equipment is PAT tested.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The nursery complies with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. All cleaning materials are placed in a locked cupboard out of children's reach. All cleaning/chemical products have a COSHH report. (COSHH reports can be found in the nursery Health and Safety folder). All Nursery products prior to purchase must be approved by the nursery manager.

Slips, trips and falls

Toughened glass has been used throughout the nursery and the hallways have a clear floor rule. Children are encouraged not to run indoors and staff will conduct dynamic risk assessments as and when required.

Climbing equipment and garden plants

All climbing equipment is closely supervised when in use. The outdoor areas are secured at all times and plants are checked for suitability. Please refer to the nursery's Outdoor policy.

Security

The external door of the nursery is secured at all times. Only staff have the authorisation to open the door. The nursery respectfully appreciates parents/guardians support in this by not opening doors to other parents/guardians, even if it is someone they know.

Visitors book

All visitors are required to sign the nursery visitors' book & be identity checked.

First Aid

The nursery has multiple first aid boxes and an accident file to record any injuries that children might sustain whilst playing in the nursery. The nursery gives a copy of the report to the parent/guardian, and a second copy is kept by the nursery. All nursery staff will hold a paediatric 1st aid qualification.

Keeping children healthy

Staff support and reinforce to children the importance of hand washing before handling food and after using the toilet.

Biological hazards

The toilet areas provide toilets, sinks, soap dispensers and paper towels. These are all easily accessible to children. Children's nappies are changed, and potties are used in the designated changing/toilet area. The nappy changing unit is disinfected between each use. Staff wear PPE for nappy change. Nappies are disposed of appropriately.

Kitchen area

A daily safety inspection is carried out by a designated member of staff. Snack containers are clearly labelled and stored in the kitchen. The nursery requests that no nut products, including peanut butter, are permitted in the setting. Cleaning cloths are colour coded. All children's food allergies/ special dietary needs are clearly displayed to ensure that all staff and students are aware of each child's individual needs.

Duties of staff in relation to Health & Safety

Whilst the duties below are specifically laid down for staff, they also provide general background which everyone must be aware of. All staff have a responsibility to:

- Be familiar with the safety regulations and guidance applying to their work
- Remember that, under the Health and Safety at Work Act, it is the duty of every employee to take reasonable care of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- Use the correct equipment and tools for their work, and use safety equipment and protective clothing supplied where appropriate
- Report any defects in machinery or equipment to the nursery Director/Manager
- Not use specialised equipment unless they have received appropriate training
- Develop a personal concern for safety, for themselves and for others, particularly newcomers
- Avoid improvisation which entails unnecessary risks and work only to safety methods which have been laid down, suggest ways of eliminating hazards
- Report all accidents or near misses to the nursery Director/Manager, whether people are injured or not
- Fill in the Accident Forms for themselves and encourage others to do so
- Set a personal example.

Heatwave

We will follow all current government guidelines. Guidance from the DfE with regards to the extreme heat:

Individual setting leaders are responsible for managing their own local circumstances. They should refer to the Emergency Planning Guidance and carry out risk assessments in line with government guidance on looking after children and young people, as well as those in early years settings during heatwaves. This includes the use of ventilation, closing rooms that are too hot, keeping children hydrated, avoiding vigorous physical activity, encouraging children to wear loose, light coloured clothing and sunhats with wide brims, to use sunscreen, and providing them with plenty of water. Children under 4 years old and some children and adults with complex medical needs and chronic conditions are potentially at a higher risk during periods of extreme heat. Settings should carry out risk assessments and amend and adapt procedures in a way which is appropriate for the individual medical needs of the children and adults in their setting.

Drugs and Adult Medication

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are committed to providing a safe and drug-free environment for all children, staff members, parents, and visitors. This policy outlines our strict stance on the use of drugs and adult medication within the nursery setting.

Drugs:

- The use, possession, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on the premises of **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**.
- Any individual found to be using or under the influence of illegal drugs on the premises will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities.

Prescription Medication for Adults:

- Any staff members or visitors who need to take prescription medication during childminding hours must inform the Director/Manager in advance.
- All prescription medication should be stored securely and out of reach of children.
- Staff members or visitors should take their prescribed medication in private and away from the presence of children.

Self-Medication:

- Staff members are discouraged from self-medicating during work hours.
- If a staff member requires medication during working hours, they must notify the Director/Manager, and arrangements will be made to ensure privacy and proper administration.

Emergency Medication:

- If a staff member or visitor requires emergency medication (e.g. an EpiPen for severe allergies), they must inform the Director/Manager and provide written authorisation for its administration, if applicable.
- Emergency medications will be kept in a readily accessible, labeled container in a secure location, and staff members will be trained in their use.

Alcohol and Smoking:

- The consumption of alcohol or smoking of any kind is strictly prohibited on the premises of **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**.
- Staff members or visitors should not be under the influence of alcohol or smoking while in the nursery setting.

Medication Records:

- Any medication brought onto the premises must be recorded in a medication log.
- The medication log will include details such as the medication name, dosage, time of administration, and the name of the staff member or visitor taking the medication.
- Medication logs will be kept confidential and securely stored.

Staff Training and Awareness:

- All staff members will be educated about this policy during their induction and will sign a declaration of their understanding and commitment to adhere to the policy.
- Staff members will receive training on the proper storage and administration of medication, as well as emergency procedures related to medication use.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3e. HIV/Aids:

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency) is caused by the virus HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and it works by attacking the body's normal defence against illness.

There is no evidence that there is a risk of transmission of infection from the following:

- Normal social domestic educational contact
- sharing washing or toilet facilities
- Sharing eating and drinking utensils
- Airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing

Children are currently unlikely to receive HIV through contaminated medical treatment within Britain.

Circumstances in which a child under 16 is likely to have acquired HIV infection include the following routes:

- in utero at birth
- drug using practices
- sexual abuse and unlawful sexual intercourse

AIDS is not a notifiable disease and, based on all the available evidence, and provided normal practices of hygiene are maintained, there is virtually no risk of transmitting HIV in the setting.

The number of people aware that a child is infectious should be determined by the parents/carers wishes and should be rigorously confined to those who need to know to ensure the proper care of the child. If a member of staff disclosed to management regarding their medical circumstances, they have the same right to discretion as a child.

Those involved in educating and caring for the above children should be sensitive to their need for confidentiality and the right to privacy. Both the parents/carers and the child may need support and counselling, and this is also likely to be needed by those involved in the direct care of the child. This would also apply to members of staff.

The general view is that the benefits to an HIV child which come from attending these facilities and enjoying normal social relationships outweigh the risk to him or her of acquiring harmful infections. Infected children should therefore be allowed to attend freely and be treated in the same way as other children.

Assessment of possible risks and the management of immunodeficient children should be dealt with by their GP or a medical specialist if one is involved; this would be applicable for members of staff also.

For further guidance, refer to the Northumberland Social Services Department for HIV / AIDS Policy Statement and Hygiene Procedures Guidance – Hygiene control – The Teacher's Union.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3f. Equal opportunities / Inclusion Policy:

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are dedicated to fostering an environment where every child is respected, valued, and treated fairly, regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, or ability. Our commitment to equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion ensures that all children can thrive and reach their full potential.

Guided by key legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we adhere to OFSTED regulations and local authority guidelines to maintain a safe and inclusive setting.

We actively promote equality by celebrating diversity and ensuring no child faces discrimination. Our approach challenges stereotypes, encourages positive attitudes towards differences, and creates a welcoming space where all children feel represented and appreciated.

For children with additional needs, we make reasonable adjustments to support their full participation. We work closely with parents or guardians to understand individual requirements and collaborate with external professionals to provide the necessary resources and assistance.

Our curriculum is designed to reflect the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of the children in our care. We carefully select books, toys, and learning materials that represent a range of ethnicities, abilities, and family structures, ensuring that positive role models from diverse backgrounds are visible and celebrated.

Recognising the importance of language and communication in fostering inclusion, we value and respect children's home languages and cultures. We encourage bilingualism and multilingualism, using inclusive language that allows children to express themselves in ways that feel natural and authentic.

Partnerships with parents are at the heart of our approach. We actively involve them in their child's education, seek their input, and work collaboratively to address concerns, make adjustments, and ensure each child's well-being and inclusion.

To uphold our commitment, we provide ongoing training and professional development for staff, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to challenge discrimination, promote inclusive practices, and support children with additional needs. We encourage continuous learning and reflection, ensuring our team remains informed about best practices in inclusive childcare.

By embracing these principles, we create an environment where all children feel safe, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3g. Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy:

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for children with special and additional support needs (SEND). This Special and Additional Support Needs Policy outlines our approach to meeting the individual needs of children with SEND, ensuring they receive the appropriate care, learning experiences, and support within our nursery setting.

Definition of SEND:

- SEND refers to children who have disabilities or specific needs that require additional support to access and participate fully in the childcare setting.

Inclusivity and Respect:

- We believe that every child has the right to a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes their well-being, development, and learning.

Identification and Assessment:

- We will work with parents or legal guardians to identify and assess any special or additional support needs that a child may have.
- We will collaborate with professionals, such as health care providers or educational specialists, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the child's needs.

Individualised Support Plans:

- Based on assessments, we will create individualised support plans in collaboration with parents, legal guardians, and professionals.
- Support plans will outline specific goals, strategies, adaptations, and resources required to meet the child's needs.

Staff Training and Development:

- Our staff members will receive training on understanding and supporting children with various types of SEND.
- We will continuously seek opportunities for professional development to enhance our ability to meet diverse needs.

Communication and Collaboration:

- We will maintain open communication with parents or legal guardians to share progress, concerns, and updates related to the child's development and support.
- Collaboration with professionals involved in the child's care and development will be encouraged.

Inclusive Learning Experiences:

- We will adapt our activities and learning experiences to accommodate the child's needs, ensuring their full participation and engagement.

Accessibility:

- Our physical environment will be designed to be accessible for children with mobility challenges or other physical needs.
- We will provide materials and resources in accessible formats for children with sensory impairments.

Emotional and Social Well-being:

- We will promote positive social interactions, relationships, and emotional well-being for children with SEND.

Review and Adaptation:

- Individual support plans will be reviewed regularly to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.
- We will be responsive to changes in the child's needs, adapting our strategies and approaches accordingly.

Confidentiality:

- Information about children's SEND will be treated with confidentiality, and disclosure will only occur with parental consent or when required by law.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3h. Behaviour Management and Physical Handling:

The nursery believes that children flourish best when they know how they are expected to behave and should be free to play and learn without fear of being hurt or unfairly restricted by anyone else. The nursery aims to provide an environment in which there is acceptable behaviour and where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their environment. Staff reward positive behaviour, ensure all children feel valued, and give praise and attention to avoid it being sought through negative behaviours. The nursery manager keeps up to date with new legislation, research and thinking on encouraging positive behaviour. All new training is cascaded to all members of the staff; this ensures consistency with strategies, enabling the children to receive the same clear rules and boundaries from all of the staff.

All nursery staff, volunteers and students provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents/guardians and one another with friendliness, respect, care and courtesy. The nursery demands that all staff, volunteers and students use positive strategies for handling conflict by helping children to find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development, for example distraction, praise and reward. The nursery familiarises all staff and volunteers with the nursery's behaviour policy and its rules and boundaries. The nursery praises and endorses desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share. The nursery avoids creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.

Frequent areas of conflict or dispute include fighting over toys, not joining in group activities, not sharing things and refusal to co-operate i.e. tidying up. How a particular type of behaviour is handled will depend upon the child and the circumstances, including the age and development of the particular child and their ability to understand and deal with the situation. We prefer to deal with difficult situations by asking the child to talk and think about what they did, and asking what they think will happen if they persist in an activity that either disrupts the group or causes harm to themselves. It may be that the child will not be able to make their choice of activity for a limited period, or that the child may be asked to have thinking time. Thinking time is supported by an adult (maximum time of one minute for every year of the child's age).

In extreme cases the child would be separated from the group until they have calmed down and have had time to reflect upon their behaviour. In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make it clear immediately that the behaviour is unacceptable by means of explanations rather than personal blame. This would be reported to both sets of parents/guardians.

The nursery gives reassurance to the child/children who have been bullied and ensures that children who bully receive praise when they display acceptable behaviour. We do not label children who bully. When children have been bullied, we share what has happened with their parent/guardian, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

Children must be encouraged to recognise that bullying, fighting, hurting and verbal abuse are not acceptable behaviours. The nursery wants children to recognise that certain actions are right, and others are wrong. Children are given opportunities to release their feelings more creatively. The nursery would hold a child against their will following an anti-social act, or if the child was in danger of hurting themselves, another child, an adult or of damaging property.

Parents/guardians will be informed if their child is persistently unkind to others, or if their child has been upset. In all cases, inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in the facility at the time. Parents/guardians may be asked to meet with staff to discuss their child's behaviour, so that possible underlying motives can be established. A joint approach to resolving any difficulties will be utilised to ensure consistency between the nursery and home.

The nursery can call upon outside agencies for additional support for families. In extreme cases where the child's behaviour affects the wellbeing of other children, staff and the environment, it might be necessary to suspend the child from the nursery for a short period of time, or if these extremes persist then parents/guardians may be asked to withdraw their child. Within 24 hours the nursery will arrange a meeting between the parents/guardians, key person, SENCO and if necessary, the Local Authority Inclusion Coordinator. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify the child's needs, and to discuss plans and strategies to put into place to support the child before the child returns to the nursery.

By positively promoting good behaviour, valuing cooperation and encouraging a caring attitude, we hope to ensure that children will develop as responsible members of society.

For the children who need additional support we will:

- Ensure the welfare of the child is a paramount consideration and all actions taken are in their best interest
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians
- Monitor the learning and wider Nursery environment to ensure that all possible measures have been taken to lessen negative impact
- Keep monitoring records of persistent patterns of behaviour
- Carry out a risk assessment of pupil behaviour and learning environments to ensure all members of the nursery community are kept safe
- Hold regular behaviour management planning meetings with Nursery staff
- Use physical intervention, if appropriate and necessary, supported by the behaviour plan
- Ensure high levels of supervision with familiar staff at all times

- Ensure pupils feel secure, valued and safe
- Describe desired behaviours clearly and offer frequent positive feedback
- Help individual pupils to set their own realistic, achievable targets
- When necessary, work in a multi-agency approach

The management of behaviour should be a positive learning experience for children and staff. Our handling should be aimed at leading a child to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour, moving from external control to internal control and self-regulation.

Staff Behaviour

Staff model positive behaviour by always being polite, helpful and listening to each other, children, parents and carers (see Whistleblowing Policy 4). The staff have a responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the nursery, both during and outside of working hours. The staff are in a position of trust and influence as role models for the children in their care, and as such must demonstrate behaviour that sets a good example to all users of the setting. Swearing and abusive behaviour are not tolerated from anyone at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**. If any member of staff exhibits such behaviour, they will be subject to **1st Step Pre-school Ltd's** disciplinary procedures. See Policy 3i for Social Networking Sites.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3i. Information, Communication, Technology (ICT):

Definition of ICT: All fixed and mobile technologies that children may encounter, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their well-being and safety.

Mobile Phones: Staff, Parents/carers, Visitors

Mobile phones must be switched off during working hours and kept in the designated staff room / lockers. Mobile phones must not be used unless on a designated break and then this must be away from children. In an emergency, phones may be left switched on and kept in a secure location in the room. If used, a witness must be present. Parents/visitors will be asked to not use their mobile phones on the premises unless instructed to do so away from the children/under supervision. The setting has a mobile phone for use in emergencies, and outings.

Cameras/Digital Cameras

Parents/Carers sign a declaration for permission to use photographs of the children. Personal cameras are not to be used; **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will provide each site with a setting phone and tablets so that photographs can be taken of the children for observations, parent correspondence etc. These devices will all be password protected.

Computers and Internet Facilities

At 1st Step Preschool, we use TV screens connected to laptops to display age-appropriate content that supports and enhances children's learning. This content is carefully selected to align with educational goals and is used only when relevant to the curriculum. Screen time is limited and purposeful, ensuring that it complements hands-on activities and interactive learning experiences.

Social Networking Sites

Staff must not post anything onto social networking sites, such as 'Facebook' that could be construed to have any impact on **1st Step Pre-school Ltd's** reputation, or offend any other member of staff or parent using our service. If staff choose to allow parents to view their own personal page on social networking sites, then this relationship must remain professional at all times and confidentiality must be taken into account. Staff will not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile telephone number. If any of the above are found to be happening then the member of staff involved will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd has a Facebook and Instagram page, which will display information about the setting/s. This will be updated and administered by the directors, setting manager, or another appropriately identified member of the team. Parents/carers will have access to these pages, however Photographs of children and their names will not be published on Facebook or Instagram without consent.

Anyone found abusing these pages will be immediately deleted and no further use of the sites will be allowed.

Website

1st Step Pre-school Ltd have a website (www.1ststeppreschool.co.uk) which is updated and administered by management. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** may use photographs/videos on the website that include children in publicity that reasonably promotes the work at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, or for teaching materials for use with future children, but for no other purpose. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If we become aware that these images are being used inappropriately or if a parent wishes their child's photo to be deleted from the photo library, then the use of the images will stop immediately. These images will no longer be used in future publications but may continue to appear in publications already in circulation.

Communication Devices (walkie-talkies)

These will be used by staff only and will be used to communicate between inside and outside areas and in cases where contact may be required with other staff members across the setting e.g. outings, moving of rooms. Additional communication devices are available if the other devices fail to work.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3j. Uncollected Child Policy

Children will only be released from our care to a parent/carer or to someone named and authorised by them. A password will be used to confirm identity if the person collecting the child is not previously known to us.

Should a child fail to be collected from our setting at the agreed time, we will call parents/carers after 15 minutes has lapsed. If we cannot reach them, we will next call their emergency contact. If we still cannot reach anybody to collect the child, we will keep the child at our setting for up to one hour. During this time, we will continue to make calls to parents/carers. After one hour, we would contact Onecall for advice.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd has procedures and documentation in place to ensure that parents/carers, or those responsible adults collecting children, are fully informed of their session times, and our opening and closing times.

NB: If you are running late to collect your child, please contact the Nursery asap.

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session, the Nursery puts into practice agreed procedures. These practices ensure the child is cared for safely by a minimum of two members of staff, one of which will hold a minimum level 3 childcare qualification or equivalent, and who are known to the child.

Procedures:

- Parents/carers of children starting at the Nursery are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on the child's registration form:
- Parents/carers home contact numbers.
- Parents/carers work contact numbers.
- Mobile telephone numbers.
- Contact details of 2 other adults and their relationship to the child who are authorised by the parents/carers to collect their child from the Nursery, e.g. a grandparent or childminder.
- The parent/carer also records an agreed password.
- Who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Information about any person who does **not** have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents/carers are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they must inform us of how they can be contacted.
- Parents/carers are expected to update key contact details when changes to contact details occur.
- On those occasions when parents/carers or the authorised persons are unable to collect the child then they will provide us with details of the name, address,

telephone number and agreed password of the person who will be collecting their child.

- In the unlikely event that a parent/carer is stuck in traffic or has been unexpectedly delayed, they are asked to contact us immediately. If no message is received, the procedure below for failing to collect a child will be followed after 15 minutes

Procedure to follow for late collection of a child:

- The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are telephoned on their contact numbers.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents/carers to collect their child from the Nursery – and whose telephone numbers are recorded on their child's Registration form are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does **not** leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file (unless agreed and verified by parent/carer & Nursery.)
- If no-one collects the child after one hour and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the following procedures for uncollected children.

Procedure to follow for an uncollected child:

- A member of staff will ring Onecall.
- The child stays at Nursery in the care of two staff members - which one will hold a level 3 qualification- until the child is safely collected either by the parents/carers or by a social care worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent/carer or relative. If they unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the Local Authority.
- Under **no** circumstances will staff members go to look for the parents/carers, nor take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident will be recorded.
- Depending on the circumstances, **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** reserves the right to charge parents/carers for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3k. Child Safety: Lost / Missing Child Policy

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are committed to ensuring the safety and security of all children in our care. This Lost/Missing Child Policy outlines our approach to preventing and responding to situations involving a lost/missing child to ensure their prompt and safe return to their parent or legal guardian.

Arrival and Departure Procedures:

- Children will be signed in upon arrival and signed out when they depart.
- Parents will inform the staff if someone other than themselves will be collecting their child.

Outdoor Activities:

- Outdoor activities will be carefully planned and supervised to prevent children from wandering off or becoming separated from the group.
- Staff will establish clear boundaries and guidelines for outdoor play.

Staff Training:

- Staff members will receive training on the Lost/Missing Child Policy and the steps to take in case of a lost/missing child situation.
- Staff will be familiar with the nursery setting's layout, emergency contacts, and procedures.

All staff will ensure children are accounted for at all times, through the day head counts and checks on the register will be completed. If a child is not accounted for, the Manager or Deputy will then deploy a thorough search of the building / outside area (or place of visit) by the rest of the staff; all staff will report back to the manager/deputy. While the search is taking place all the children will be escorted to one area where they will be supervised by a member of staff. The staff will be deployed depending on staff: child ratio. If the child is found, the incident is recorded and the parent/carer informed. If the child is still not accounted for, the manager will contact the child's parents/carers, the police and the directors. A detailed record of the incident will be kept. Ofsted will be informed of the incident. All incidents are reviewed by the directors and management team and a risk assessment is carried out. The flow chart for a lost / missing child will be used (see separate page)

Lost / Missing Child Flow Chart

The following procedure must be adhered to if a child is missing:

Enquiries are made with all staff on the whereabouts of the child

*

*

If the child is unaccounted for,

All the children are taken to one area and supervised by designated staff member/s

*

*

A thorough search of the building/playground/place of visit is carried out by the remaining staff, depending on staff: child ratio. Staff report back to the manager

*

*

If the child is found, incident is recorded and parent/carer informed. Child is kept calm until collected.	If child is still not accounted for, management will contact child's parents/carers, the police, and the directors
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A detailed record of the incident will be kept.

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Ofsted will be informed of the incident.

All incidents are reviewed by the directors and management team and a risk assessment carried out.

*used to indicate notes/information to be recorded

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3I. Outings Policy

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we recognise the value of outings in enriching children's learning experiences and connecting them with the world around them. This Outings Policy outlines our approach to planning, conducting, and ensuring the safety of outings for children in our care.

Purpose of Outings

Outings are organised to provide children with new experiences, learning opportunities, and a chance to explore their community.

Planning and Preparation

Staff will plan outings in advance, considering the children's ages, interests, and needs

Parental Consent

Parents/carers will be provided with details of planned outings in advance and written parental consent will be obtained before each outing, outlining the destination, mode of transportation, and emergency contact information.

Ratios and Supervision

Staff will maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios during outings to ensure children's safety and supervision. Staff will also adhere to any local guidelines or regulations regarding staff-to-child ratios during outings.

Safety Measures

Staff will follow safety guidelines and ensure children's safety during transportation, while at the destination, and during the return journey. Children will be reminded of safety rules before and during outings.

Emergency Preparedness

Staff will carry a fully stocked first aid kit and necessary medication for children during outings. Emergency contact information for parents/carers, medical services and emergency services will be readily available.

Communication

Staff will communicate with children, ensuring they understand the expectations and rules for the outing. Parents/carers will be informed of the outing's details and any specific requirements, such as clothing or items to bring.

Cultural and Religious Considerations

Staff will be sensitive to cultural and religious considerations when planning outings and accommodating dietary or other needs.

Additional Staff

For larger outings or outings with multiple children, additional staff members or assistants may accompany the group to ensure adequate supervision.

Record Keeping

Staff will maintain records of outings, including consent forms, risk assessments, and any incidents or accidents that occur during the outings.

Alternate Plans

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, staff will have alternate plans or designations to ensure children's safety and engagement.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3m. Lockdown Policy

If there was a threat to the children at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** the following principle would be taken: Safe, Shelter, Fast.

The following basic steps would be taken to achieve this:

1. Raise the alarm
2. Get the children to a place of safety
3. Alert the emergency services

These steps are outlined in more detail as follows:

- Raise the alarm by using communication devices to other staff
- Shut down and barricade the doors using furniture, spare tables, chairs etc
- Close curtains/blinds and lock the windows and doors
- Get all children and staff to a safe space with lockable doors. A staff member will call the emergency services
- Turn the light out
- If staff and children are outside the staff will escort the children back into the building closing all doors behind them. They will communicate with staff inside via the communication devices.

The member of staff who contacted the emergency services will keep in constant contact with them and wait to be informed the coast is clear and safe.

Please see Appendix F for each setting and their specific lockdown procedure.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3n. Data Protection Policy

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** we respect the privacy of the children attending the nursery and the privacy of their parents or carers, as well as the privacy of our staff. Our aim is to ensure that all those using and working at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** can do so with confidence that their personal data is being kept secure.

Our lead person for data protection is **Ryan McMillan**. The lead person ensures that the nursery meets the requirements of the GDPR, liaises with statutory bodies when necessary, and responds to any subject access requests.

Confidentiality

Within **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** we respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- We will only ever share information with a parent about their own child
- Information given by parents to **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** employees/workers about their child will not be passed on to third parties without permission unless there is a safeguarding issue (as covered in our Safeguarding Policy)
- Concerns or evidence relating to a child's safety, will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, except with the Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Staff only discuss individual children for purposes of planning and group management.
- Staff are made aware of the importance of confidentiality during their induction process.
- Issues relating to the employment of staff, whether paid or voluntary, will remain confidential to those making personnel decisions.
- All personal data is stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet / on a password protected computer.
- Students on work placements and volunteers are informed of our Data Protection policy and are required to respect it.

Information that we keep

Children and parents: We hold only the information necessary to provide a childcare service for each child. This includes child registration information, medical information, parent contact information, attendance records, incident and accident records and so forth. Once a child leaves our care we retain only the data required by statutory legislation and industry best practice, and for the prescribed periods of time. Electronic data that is no longer required is deleted and paper records are disposed of securely.

Staff: We keep information about employees in order to meet HMRC requirements, and to comply with all other areas of employment legislation. We retain the information after a member of staff has left our employment for the recommended period of time, then it is deleted or destroyed as necessary.

Sharing information with third parties

We will only share child information with outside agencies on a need-to-know basis and with consent from parents, except in cases relating to safeguarding children, criminal activity, or if required by legally authorised bodies (eg Police, HMRC, etc). If we decide to share information without parental consent, we will record this in the child's file, clearly stating our reasons.

We will only share relevant information that is accurate and up to date. Our primary commitment is to the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

Some limited personal information is disclosed to authorised third parties we have engaged to process it, as part of the normal running of our business, for example to manage our payroll and accounts. Any such third parties comply with the strict data protection regulations of the GDPR.

Subject access requests

- Parents/carers can ask to see the information and records relating to their child, and/or any information that we keep about themselves
- Staff and volunteers can ask to see any information that we keep about them.
- We will make the requested information available as soon as practicable, and will respond to the request within one month at the latest.
- If our information is found to be incorrect or out of date, we will update it promptly.
- If any individual about whom we hold data has a complaint about how we have kept their information secure, or how we have responded to a subject access request, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

GDPR

We comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), regarding obtaining, storing and using personal data.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

3o. Suitable People

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all staff, customers and children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Therefore, it is vital that the company applies recruitment and selection procedures that identify people who are suitable to work with children.

Who this policy affects:

The measures described in this policy should be applied in relation to everyone who has responsibility for the care of children for any length of time and, at the discretion of the Directors, those who regularly come into contact with children in a supporting capacity.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Help deter, reject or identify people who might harm children or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.
- Operate such procedures consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about candidates.
- Seek to secure an on-going safe and secure environment for children by ensuring all staff are suitably trained in recognising and responding to signs of harm.

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** we aim to ensure that all people working with children are suitable to do so and we are therefore extremely vigilant when recruiting new staff to join our team.

We are committed to providing the best possible care to our children, and to safeguard and promote the welfare of young children. The nursery is also committed to providing a supportive working environment for all its members of staff. The nursery recognises that, to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff who share this commitment. The nursery will follow a strict safeguarding procedure to protect all children and young people in our care and expects all staff and volunteers, students and agency staff to share this commitment.

Recruitment Procedure:

- Job vacancies are posted on Indeed/ Facebook with a job description including essential and desirable criteria
- All prospective candidates will be asked to forward a copy of their current CV, which details their previous employment and academic history etc
- Suitable applicants will then be sent a copy of our application form

- Returned application forms will be cross referenced and scored against the job description and essential/desirable criteria
- Applicants will then be contacted either by email, letter or phone to let them know if they have been successful in reaching the next stage, a face-to-face interview.
- Candidates that are invited along to an interview are asked to bring with them:
 - Photo ID
 - Passport, Driving Licence
 - Proof of address
 - Driving Licence, Utility Bill/Bank Statement (issued within the last 3 months) Council Tax Bill etc
 - Proof of NI
 - NI card, P45/P60
 - Proof of qualifications
 - Certificates (originals)
 - Eligibility to work in the UK
 - Birth Certificate, Passport, NI number

If an applicant claims to have changed his/her name by deed poll, the correct legal documentation will also be requested. Applicants will also be asked if they hold a current DBS and if it is registered on the Update Service. During the interview, detailed enquires will be made regarding any gaps in employment and reason for leaving employment. After pre-employment checks have been completed the successful candidate will then receive a formal job offer.

Induction:

Once the formal offer of employment has been accepted the new member of staff will be on a 6 month probation period, during this time the staff member will be trained in all areas using our Induction Programme and Staff Passport.

New members of staff will not be allowed unsupervised access or be able to provide intimate care (nappy changing or supervising toileting) to any child until their DBS is completed and it's clear.

New employees will undergo an induction period, during which time they will read nursery policies and procedures and will be trained by a "mentor" who will introduce them to the way in which the nursery operates.

New members of staff will have their Safeguarding training via Northumberland County Council's Early Years Team.

Online training such as Prevent Duty, basic food and hygiene, allergens etc will be completed within the employee's induction period using SharePoint (via NCC EYT.)

Documents given to staff during their induction:

- Code of Conduct
- Staff policy and procedure file
- New starter staff details form

- Personal information form
- P46 form if required
- Employee Suitability Declaration form
- Fire drill procedure

All staff members will be invited to attend ongoing suitability interviews as well as appraisal/performance reviews. Staff are responsible for notifying the Director/Manager, in person, if any circumstances arise that may affect their suitability to work with children, which includes any health concerns or incidents that have occurred outside the nursery.

Enhanced DBS checks:

Due to the nature of the work, the nursery will apply for Disclosure and Barring certificates for new members of staff from the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS). The nursery will cover the cost of the first check (unless the new employee leaves the company within the first 6 months and in this instance the cost of the DBS will be charged to the member of staff.)

The nurseries will always request an enhanced disclosure as described below:

- An enhanced disclosure will contain details of all convictions on record including current and spent convictions (including those which are defined as “spent” under the rehabilitation of offenders Act 1974) together with any details of any cautions, reprimands or warning held on the Police National Computer. It may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question.
- If the individual is applying for a position working with children, it will also reveal whether he/she is barred from working with children by virtue of his/ her inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children maintained by the DFES and the department of health.

The nurseries policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information. In particular, the nursery will.

- Store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked cabinets, access to which will be restricted to specific members of staff
- Not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than necessary. In most cases the nursery will not retain such information for longer than 6 months although the nursery will keep a record of the date of the disclosure and the disclosure number which will be recorded on their personal information forms.

Once the member of staff has received their DBS certificate, they will be required to sign up to the DBS Update Service which is £16 annually (payable by the member of staff.)

This will enable Directors/Managers to regularly monitor any changes to the DBS that may not have been disclosed and ensure that all staff are fit and safe to work with children.

If a member of staff fails to sign up for the DBS Update Service or misses the deadline to register for the Update Service, then the member of staff will be required to pay for their next DBS check.

Staff members will be required to ensure their annual Update Service fee is paid in full and on time to ensure continuity of their DBS. If a member of staff fails to make the Update Service annual subscription payment they will be required to pay for their next DBS check.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

4. Whistleblowing Policy

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we are committed to maintaining a safe, transparent, and open environment where staff members, parents/carers, and stakeholders feel empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. This Whistle-Blowing/Raising Concerns Policy outlines our approach to addressing and resolving concerns effectively.

Definition of Whistle-Blowing:

- Whistle-blowing refers to the act of raising concerns about suspected misconduct, malpractice, risks, or violations of policies within the nursery setting.

Reporting Process:

- Reporting should be carried out in a respectful, professional and confidential manner.
- Individuals raising concerns should provide as much detail as possible, including the nature of the concern, individuals involved, date, time, and any supporting evidence.
- Staff members, parents/carers, and stakeholders are encouraged to report their concerns through appropriate channels, including direct communication with staff, designated individuals, Police. LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer – for further details see addendum 1)
- In some cases concerns raised to the nursery may have to be passed onto outside agencies such as LADO, Police.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

- Concerns raised through the whistle-blowing process will be treated with confidentiality to the extent possible.
- Individuals reporting concerns can choose to remain anonymous, although providing contact information is encouraged for effective communication during the investigation.

Protection Against Reprisal:

- Staff members, parents/carers, and stakeholders who raise genuine concerns will be protected against any form of reprisal, discrimination, or victimisation as a result of their report.

Fair Treatment:

- Concerns will be treated seriously.
- Any internal investigations will be carried out in a fair, impartial, and timely manner.

- Staff members responsible for the investigation will have appropriate training and experience.

Whistle-Blower's Role:

- Whistle-blowers may be asked to cooperate in the investigation process by providing additional information, attending interviews, or providing witness statements.

Action and Resolution:

- Upon completion of the investigation, appropriate actions will be taken to address and resolve the concerns raised.
- If the concern is substantiated, corrective measures will be implemented to prevent further issues.

Right to Appeal:

- Individuals dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may have the right to appeal to a higher authority within the nursery setting.

False or Malicious Reports:

- Deliberately false or malicious reports will result in disciplinary action against the individual making the report.

Contact Details:

LADO:

The LADO for Northumberland is Louise Prudhoe

Call: 07500 606174 (Monday to Thursday 08:30-17:00, Friday 08:30-16:30) or 01670 536400 (Out of hours)

Email: LADO@northumberland.gov.uk

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

4a. Recruitment of Ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants suitability for positions of trust, **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience. All application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form and a live update will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment. We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily exclude you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

4b. Childcare Disqualification Declaration Regulations

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is required to ensure that staff and volunteers are not disqualified from working in the setting under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

A person may be disqualified through:

1. Having certain orders or other restrictions placed upon them
2. Having committed certain offences
3. Living in the same household as someone who is disqualified by virtue of 1 or 2 above (this is known as disqualification by association).

Therefore, all staff and directors are required to annually sign a Childcare Disqualification Declaration Form confirming that they are not disqualified under the Regulations from working at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**.

If staff and directors fail to complete and return the form to management, this will be regarded as a disciplinary matter, which may result in dismissal and in the case of volunteers, this may mean that they can no longer work at **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**.

A person is disqualified if any of the following apply :

- They have been cautioned for, or convicted of certain violent or sexual criminal offences against adults and any offences against children
- They are the subject of an Order, direction or similar in respect of childcare, including orders made in respect of their own children
- That have had registration refused or cancelled in relation to childcare of children's homes or have been disqualified from private fostering

Anyone who is disqualified will be immediately removed from the setting. They can then apply to Ofsted for a waiver. Support will be provided with this process. Further details on how to make an application for a waiver can be found on the Ofsted fact sheet.

Applying to waive disqualification : early years and childcare providers. Whilst a waiver application is under consideration, the individual will not be allowed to continue to work in the setting. Once a waiver has been granted from Ofsted then the staff will be allowed back to work in the setting. Ofsted may grant a full or partial waiver, including a waiver that would allow an individual to work in the setting. Where a waiver is not granted, the employee may need to be dismissed.

If an individual is identified as disqualified the following information should be provided by the individual without delay:

- Details of any order, determination, restriction, conviction, caution or other grounds for disqualification from registration under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009

- The date(s) of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose
- The relevant court(s) or body(ies) which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed
- A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).

This information may be supplied separately to the form. Any information given to **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** will be provided to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the date the nursery became aware of the information.

Staff and directors must notify management immediately if anything that affects their suitability to work with children including any pending court appearances, cautions, warnings, convictions, orders or other determinations made in respect of them or a member of their household.

The declaration form will be kept in **1st Step Pre-school Ltd's** Single Central Record. Staff and directors will be required to complete a form annually.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

4c. Suitable premises, Environment and Equipment

1st Step Pre-school Ltd will take reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children, both indoors and outdoors, are kept to a minimum. All staff are made aware of this policy and undertake training when needed; the manager updates the staff team when needed.

A visual risk assessment will be done before the start of every session (and any other room used) and risks removed if needed ie remove chairs, tables etc. Risk Assessments will be regularly carried out by management (every 6 months or earlier if required) which will cover everything that a child may come into contact with, including inside environment, outside environment and documentation. These records will include the date, who has carried them out, any comments/risks identified, and a review date. Refer also to Policy 3K Child Safety regarding security. Electrical equipment is regularly PAT tested (portable appliance tested) by an outside electrician. Separate Risk Assessments (written if needed) will be carried out prior to trips and outings, (including an assessment of required adult : child ratios) and a copy is given to all staff and to parents if requested (see 3I Outings Policy).

Any hazards, faulty or broken equipment/toys need to be immediately reported to the Lead practitioner. Children are encouraged and praised if they report any hazards to the staff. The equipment will be removed from **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, or if appropriate children will be immediately removed from the hazardous area. Sharp edges of corners will be covered to prevent injury. Wires will be clipped to the wall and obstacles will be removed or pushed to the sides, to prevent falls. If an accident, incident or injury occurs, this will be recorded on the accident/incident forms and the parent informed on collection of their child. **See Appendix E for an inventory of equipment/resources that are held in 1st Step Pre-school Ltd.**

The premises will be adequately ventilated, well lit and a temperature maintained that ensures the comfort of the children and staff. The windows are of a suitable height, have safety glass and have safety locks. The blinds have safety chains to prevent injury. The indoor space requirements of 2.3m² per child are met (based on net area of the room and not including storage areas). As far as is reasonable, facilities, equipment and access are suitable for children with disabilities. A designated comfy area is provided for children who wish to relax, play quietly or sleep.

See also 5a Fire Safety Policy and 5b Evacuation Procedures Policy.

Ofsted will be informed of any change to the premises that may affect the space available to children or any structural alterations or change to the outside of the premises, either prior to the event occurring or within 14 days (see Policy 1d Ofsted). A current Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance will be displayed and renewed annually (this includes Public Liability Insurance). **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** accepts no responsibility for lost, misplaced, broken or damaged clothing belongings or toys; this is the responsibility of the owner.

Manual Handling

1st Step Pre-school Ltd is aware of The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and has a duty of care to ensure as far as is reasonable practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees. A Health and Safety poster will be displayed at all times. The lead Practitioner is responsible for reviewing and monitoring risks and hazards and will attend manual handling training when available and report back to staff (See Appendix D for training information on Moving and Handling Objects). However, all employees have a responsibility of care for themselves and for others. **1st Step Pre-school Ltd** ensures it is a safe place of work by providing information, training where necessary, supervising staff and providing equipment if needed so that any risks are reduced. Risk assessments will be regularly carried out to identify risks and to assess the severity of the risk/hazard. Staff will try to avoid to manually lift loads and equipment, but if there is no other option then the safest system will be used. This will be done by checking the route to be taken, ensuring there is no obstruction, inspecting the weight of the load and asking for help from other staff. If staff have any known health problems, they must report to the Lead Practitioner before the start of their shift. Any accidents that occur will be recorded in the Accident/Incident file.

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

5. Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation

At **1st Step Pre-school Ltd**, we prioritise the safety and well-being of all children in our care. This emergency evacuation procedure outlines our approach to safely evacuating the nursery in the event of a fire or any other emergency that requires immediate evacuation.

Fire Alarms and Fire Exits:

- The nursery setting will be equipped with functional fire alarms and smoke detectors that are regularly tested and maintained.
- Fire exits will be clearly marked, well-maintained, and free of obstructions.

Emergency Plan Review and Training:

- All staff members will be familiar with the emergency evacuation procedure and will receive regular training on the correct steps to follow during an evacuation.
- The procedure will be practiced with children periodically to familiarise them with the process.

Fire Drills:

- Fire drills will be conducted regularly (at least once every three months) to ensure that staff and children know how to respond quickly and calmly in an emergency.
- A designated member of staff will initiate the fire drill by activating the fire alarm.

Emergency Assembly Point:

- A designated assembly point will be established at a safe distance from the nursery setting, but within close proximity, to gather all children and staff during an evacuation.
- The assembly point will be clearly identified and communicated to all staff members and children.

Evacuation Procedures for Children:

- Children will be calmly and swiftly guided to the nearest fire exit by staff members.
- Staff members will use age-appropriate language and gestures to direct children during the evacuation.
- Children will be organised into groups or pairs and will hold hands to maintain order and ensure everyone's safety.

Accounting for All Children:

- The designated staff member will conduct a headcount of all children at the assembly point to ensure that everyone has safely evacuated.
- Attendance records will be cross-checked to account for all children in attendance.

Communication with Emergency Services:

- Once everyone is accounted for at the assembly point, the designated staff member will promptly contact the emergency services to report the situation and provide essential information.

Medical Attention:

- In case of any injuries or health concerns during the evacuation, immediate first aid will be administered by trained staff members.
- Emergency medical services will be called if necessary.

Communication with Parents:

- Parents or legal guardians will be notified as soon as possible about the emergency situation and the evacuation procedures.
- Regular updates will be provided to parents until the situation is resolved.

Re-entry to the Premises:

- No one will re-enter the nursery setting until it is declared safe by emergency services or relevant authorities.

Review and Monitoring:

- This emergency evacuation procedure will be reviewed and practiced regularly (at least once every three months) to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with any changes in legislation or local guidelines.
- A log of all fire drills will be kept
- Feedback from staff, parents, and external agencies will be welcomed to continuously improve our emergency evacuation procedures.

Our fire drill record book contains:

- The date and time of when the drill took place
- How long it took
- Whether there were any problems that delayed the evacuation
- Any further action taken to improve the drill procedure

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

5a. Biting Policy and Procedure

Biting is a Toddler habit that causes distress to both the child who has bitten (the 'biter') and their family and the child who has been bitten (the 'bitee') and their family. Both groups must be supported.

Biting usually occurs between one to two and a half years old, although it can occur in slightly older children, Biting usually offers some form of initial gratification either from teething, frustration or anger. Initially young toddlers just sink their teeth into flesh unaware of the pain their action may cause.

In a nursery, there are lots of potential victims as well as an exciting, busy ethos which can create over excitement.

At **1st Step Preschool Ltd**, we have initiated the following policy for the following reasons:

- To protect the children and staff attending the nursery
- To encourage children to develop and behave in a socially acceptable way
- To provide procedures for staff to follow when a bite occurs
- To ensure a consistent approach to biting
- To offer strategies to minimise the incidents of biting

Reasons for biting:

- Teething – sore mouth
- Frustration
- Sensory exploration
- Impulsiveness
- Excitement
- Boredom
- Self-assertion
- Attention seeking
- Life changing experiences
- Learning the concept of cause and effect

It is essential to be aware that the reasons for biting vary according to age group, to the bite appropriately i.e, apply cold pack to bitten area if skin is not broken If the skin is broken, there may be a risk of infection such as tetanus and Hep B and after first aid measures have been taken, parents should be contacted.

Names of biters should be kept confidential to prevent 'labelling'

Parents of the 'biter' and 'bitee' should be informed of the circumstances surrounding the incident using the who, what, when method to pinpoint the events.

- Who was involved? Maintaining confidentiality
- What happened before and after?
- How was the situation handled?

- When did the biting occur?
- Where did it happen?

If all of the above measures have been put in place and the child continues to bite, then the following actions would apply:

- Either, parents/carers would be invited into the nursery for a meeting to further discuss regarding what the parents are doing to help stop the child biting.
- The child's place is revoked / suspended for the safety of the other children and staff with immediate effect.

Updated January 2025
Signed by Management

Review date January 2026
Signed by Directors

Policies and Procedures reviewed

All policies reviewed and amended February 2025 by SLT