



Children of the World Montessori School

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Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Child protection procedures

Purpose and scope

We safeguard and promote the welfare of every child attending Children of the World Montessori School (COTW). This policy explains how we recognise, record and respond to concerns, work with families and contact safeguarding agencies. It applies to owners, teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers, students, agency staff and other professionals working on our behalf.

This policy must be read alongside our full Child Protection Policy and the linked policies listed at the end. The owners will ensure that these documents remain consistent and that staff understand the procedures.

Safeguarding responsibilities

Cheryl Clay is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Paivi Clay is the deputy DSL. They advise staff, keep secure safeguarding records and liaise with families, children's services and other agencies. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: staff must report concerns promptly and must not assume that someone else has acted.

We follow the RBWM All-age Multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements and Berkshire child protection procedures, alongside the applicable statutory guidance. We take every child seriously and respond to concerns about abuse, neglect, domestic abuse and other risks to their welfare.

Immediate danger: call 999 and obtain emergency assistance. Do not wait for a safeguarding lead, a parent discussion or paperwork before taking urgent action. Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as possible.

Recognising and recording concerns

Staff remain alert to physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect, including patterns of concern over time. Changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing or appearance may indicate a safeguarding need. Being hungry, inadequately clothed or persistently unclean may indicate unmet needs or neglect and must be considered sensitively in context.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional risks and communication barriers. Staff must not assume that an injury, behaviour or change in mood is explained by a child's disability. We adapt communication and support so that each child can be heard.

- Stay calm, listen carefully and take the child seriously. Allow them to use their own words; do not ask leading questions or investigate.
- Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do and that they are not to blame. Explain simply that you need to tell someone who can help keep them safe. Do not promise secrecy or criticise the alleged abuser.
- Make a factual written record as soon as possible, including the date, time, circumstances, exact words used by the child and any explanation given. Distinguish observations from opinions. Record visible injuries by location, size, shape and colour, using a body map where appropriate.
- Sign and date the record and pass it promptly to the DSL or deputy. Every concern must be recorded; completing a safeguarding concern record does not depend on prior permission.

The DSL records decisions, reasons, advice, referrals and follow-up, including the reasons for sharing or not sharing information. The reporting practitioner receives appropriate feedback on a need-to-know basis.

Working with parents and deciding next steps

We discuss concerns with parents or carers first, where it is safe and appropriate to do so. We listen to their explanation, consider the child's needs and agree support. For early help, we work openly with the family and seek their agreement to the support and referral, in line with local procedures.

We do not wait for significant harm before seeking advice or arranging appropriate support. Where concerns suggest that a child may need children's services support or protection, the DSL uses local threshold guidance and consults the Single Point of Access (SPA).

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, we make a prompt safeguarding referral. Proof and parental permission are not prerequisites for taking necessary safeguarding action.

We seek safeguarding advice before speaking to parents where doing so could increase the risk to the child or another person, compromise an investigation or cause an unsafe delay. We do not automatically withhold information from parents simply because a referral is serious: we agree safe communication with the relevant agency and record our decision.

Making a referral and following it up

The DSL or deputy contacts SPA promptly for advice or an urgent referral and follows the current local referral process, including the online referral form and any required written confirmation. For children living outside RBWM, we contact children's services in their home authority; uncertainty about boundaries must not delay urgent action.

The DSL and deputy may consult each other, but action does not depend on both being available or agreeing. If neither is available, or a practitioner believes a concern is not being acted on adequately, the practitioner must contact children's services or the police directly as appropriate and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

We record the referral, who received it, advice given and agreed next steps. If there is no timely response, or concerns persist or increase, we follow up and use the local escalation procedure. We continue supporting and monitoring the child while agencies consider the referral.

Safeguarding contacts

Service	Contact
Emergency police or ambulance	999
RBWM Single Point of Access	01628 683150
Emergency Duty Team outside office hours	01344 786543
SPA advice email	MASH@achievingforchildren.org.uk Use the current online form for referrals; telephone for urgent concerns.
Local Authority Designated Officer	020 8891 7370 lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk
Police non-emergency	101
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000

Current local referral information: rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk and rbwmsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk. The safeguarding partnership office is not the route for reporting an individual child concern. The DSL checks contact details when reviewing this policy.

Confidentiality and support

Safeguarding records are stored securely, separately from ordinary classroom observation records, with access limited to those who need it. Relevant information about a child's social worker, safety plan or support needs is shared with staff who need it to care for the child safely. We share necessary, relevant information lawfully and securely; data protection must not prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

We treat children and families with care and respect, explain the process where safe and appropriate, and share updates and outcomes only where permitted and consistent with agency advice. We do not promise disclosure of confidential investigation information.

Allegations about staff and other adults

All concerns about anyone working with children, including owners, staff, volunteers, students and agency staff, must be taken seriously. This includes conduct outside work that may indicate a risk or unsuitability to work with children.

Report concerns promptly to an owner who is not involved in the allegation. Concerns about Cheryl Clay should be reported to Alexis Hall, and concerns about Alexis Hall to Cheryl Clay. Where both owners are implicated, there is a conflict of interest or the internal route is unsafe or ineffective, contact the LADO directly. Anyone can raise a concern directly with the LADO.

The responsible owner contacts the LADO without delay and within one working day where an allegation indicates that an adult may have harmed a child, committed a relevant criminal offence, posed a risk of harm to children, or behaved in a way that may make them unsuitable to work with children. If uncertain whether the threshold is met, seek LADO advice.

Take immediate steps to protect children and contact children's services or the police where necessary. Record the allegation accurately. Do not investigate, interview witnesses or discuss the substance of the allegation with the person concerned before seeking LADO advice. Agree with the LADO and, where involved, police or social care what can be shared, when and with whom.

We cooperate with the agreed process, keep information restricted to those who need it and support both the child and the adult concerned. Suspension is not automatic: the owners consider protective measures and employment action with appropriate advice. No person who is implicated or has a conflict of interest may manage the investigation.

Concerns below the LADO threshold are still recorded and addressed under our staff conduct and safer recruitment procedures. Patterns or further concerns are reviewed and discussed with the LADO where appropriate. Staff should use our Whistleblowing Policy if they believe safeguarding practice is unsafe or concerns are being ignored.

Notifying Ofsted and other bodies

We notify Ofsted of relevant allegations of harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises, whether the alleged incident occurred at the setting or elsewhere, and provide details of action taken. Notification is made as soon as possible and always within 14 days. We do not wait for the investigation to conclude.

We also make other notifications required by the EYFS. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service is made where the legal referral conditions are met, including where a person is removed from regulated activity because of harm or risk of harm, or would have been removed had they not left. Resignation does not end our safeguarding responsibilities.

Safer recruitment and staff training

We follow our Safer Recruitment Policy, check identity, right to work, references, relevant qualifications and suitability, and obtain the required enhanced DBS and barred-list checks. Staff are asked to join the DBS Update Service. Personnel records are stored securely and ongoing suitability concerns are acted on promptly.

All staff receive safeguarding induction and appropriate training. We retain our setting's commitment to safeguarding training at least every two years, with regular updates between courses and additional role-specific training for the DSL and deputy. Staff read this policy, confirm that they understand it and know how to act if the DSL is unavailable.

Related policies and statutory guidance

This policy links to our full Child Protection, Behaviour, Child-on-child Abuse, Safer Recruitment, Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism, Whistleblowing, and Data Protection and Privacy policies. Staff follow the relevant procedure where a concern involves radicalisation, harmful behaviour between children or another specific safeguarding risk.

Cheryl Clay and Alexis Hall are the setting's Data Protection and Privacy Officers. Parents receive the privacy information and safeguarding procedures when joining and are asked to acknowledge that they have read them. A parental signature is not a condition for taking necessary safeguarding action. Policies are available on our website.

We follow the current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, Working Together to Safeguard Children, applicable Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Childcare Act 2006 and relevant disqualification guidance, and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent duty guidance. We use current editions and local procedures, rather than waiting for a concern before checking our responsibilities.

Guidance and contact sources checked for this update on 12 September 2026:

EYFS statutory framework – gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

Working Together to Safeguard Children – gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Keeping Children Safe in Education – gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

Information sharing – gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-to-safeguard-children-and-young-people

Ofsted notifications – gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident

Local procedures and thresholds – rbwmsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk and berks.trixonline.co.uk

Local contacts – rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk and achievingforchildren.org.uk

Policy review

The owners review this policy at least annually and sooner following changes in guidance, local arrangements or learning from an incident. Before adopting this revision, they check it against the full Child Protection Policy and linked procedures, confirm staff responsibilities and communicate the updated arrangements to staff and families.

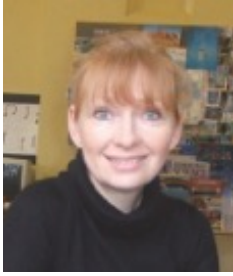
Updated 12 September 2026

Approval by Cheryl Clay and Alexis Hall: _____

Next review: September 2027 or sooner if required

Key personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead



Cheryl Clay
Co-Owner/Montessori Teacher

Behaviour - Advisory role



Alexis Hall
Co-Owner/Montessori Teacher

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Paivi Clay
Montessori Teacher/Senco
Health & Safety Officer

Behavioural Manager



Chantelle Light
Teaching Assistant