

## 1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

### Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

### Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

#### *Key commitment 1*

The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

#### *Staff and volunteers*

- Our designated persons who co-ordinate child protection issues are Viv Kidd and Liz Clark
- Our designated officer who oversees this work is the Chairperson of the management committee, currently Adrian Reed
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service before posts can be confirmed
- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised
- The Administrator records information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the criminal records disclosure reference number
  - the date the disclosure was obtained

- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us)
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.

### *Key commitment 2*

The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015).

### *Responding to suspicions of abuse*

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
  - significant changes in their behaviour
  - deterioration in their general well-being
  - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure)
  - changes in their appearance
  - changes in their play
  - unexplained bruising or marks
  - any other reason that leads us to suspect neglect or abuse inside or outside the setting.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability, whilst still being aware that our main priority is the welfare of the child
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation of children (such as through internet abuse) and Female Genital Mutilation ( see policy 1.2c) that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people with whom we may come into contact

- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking leading questions of children
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been committed, or to prevent harm to a child or adult  
Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

#### *Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action
  - does not question the child
  - makes a written, objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure, the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible, the name of the person to whom the concern was reported (with the date and time) and the names of any other person present at the time
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially
- The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity
- If the Local Safeguarding Children Board should stipulate the process for recording and sharing concerns, we will include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

#### *Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team*

- The procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team, are detailed in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015)
- We keep a copy of this document in the First Aid box for easy reference.

#### *Informing parents*

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger
- We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In such cases the social workers will inform parents.

#### *Liaison with other agencies*

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made

#### *Allegations against staff*

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse. (See Policy 10.12 "Making a complaint").
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
  - inappropriate sexual comments
  - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
  - inappropriate sharing of images
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting has abused a child
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate on 01454 868924
- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this

- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the Chair will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff member, as well as children and families, throughout the process.

### *Disciplinary action*

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

### *Key commitment 3*

The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### *Training*

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals
- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

### *Planning*

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

### *Curriculum*

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

### *Confidentiality*

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### *Support to families*

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising with the local children's social care team
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## **Legal framework**

### *Primary legislation*

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

### *Secondary legislation*

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

## **Further guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2006 - under revision 2012)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2006)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (HMG 2008) (HMG 2006)

- Independent Safeguarding Authority: [www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	<u>Filton Park Preschool Playgroup</u>	<i>(name of provider)</i>
Held on	<u></u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	<u>Sept/Oct 2020</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<u></u>	
Name of signatory	<u>Adrian Reed</u>	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	<u>Chair</u>	

#### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Safeguarding Children (2010)