

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

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



Definition of abuse

“Child abuse is **when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child** – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect” **NSPCC**

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 person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:
Beth Henery, Becky Mirza & Gemma Marchant
- Our designated officer (member of the management team) who oversees this work is:
Beth Henery, Becky Mirza & Gemma Marchant
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and 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 provision 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 (Previously Criminal Record Bureau) 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 abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service (Previously Criminal Record Bureau) checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the provision or has access to the children.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the DBS reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
 - details of who obtained it.
- 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).
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- 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 lead to dismissal for reasons of 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 provision 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 2006).

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 may be 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, their behaviour, or their play;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse 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.

- 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 that may affect or may have affected children and young people using our provision.
- See bruising protocol 2010 4LSCB paediatric assessment within 4 hours.
- 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 who we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedure 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 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's Partnership.

- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking 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 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 gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives 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 record that forms an 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 date and time; and
- the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the settings concerns folder which is kept securely and confidentially, and /or on Kindersoft pin protected.
- The manager acting as the Designated Person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication *Safeguarding Children* contains procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).
- We keep a copy of this document alongside procedures set down by our Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

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 on Nursery In A Box 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 these cases the social workers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on 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 social services 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.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
-

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the provision, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- 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, or
 - Inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnersip when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the provision, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by 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, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by 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's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and 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 director/owner 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 as well as children and families throughout the process.
- **Whistle Blowing;** Employees and workers who make public disclosures about wrongdoings in the work place are commonly known as "whistle-blowers". In the past, employees were sometimes dismissed or victimised by their employers, which discouraged the 'whistle blowing'. With the introduction of new legislation, whistle blowers are now protected under certain circumstances. Not all whistle blowing is protected. Only protection is for qualifying disclosures.
- If you have a concern about a member of staff please contact Rebecca Mirza (Director) Directly on 02380 273898/ 07813079847

If you wish to go further than you would contact Local Authority Designated Officer Mark Blackwell - 01962 876364 or Ofsted on 0300 123 1231 whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

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 Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- Management are Level 3 Safeguarding trained and we endeavour to send all staff on Safeguarding training. Complete online training
- We raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), breast ironing,, The Prevent Duty, Radicalisation and The Fundamental British Values. This information is given to staff when they are inducted and through summary cards and policy updates.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision.

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 that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, 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.
- We build confidence within the children to help protect against peer on peer bullying.
- Staff are vigilant and observe children behaviour and follow our achieving positive behaviour policy 7.1

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 Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

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, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times 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 Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support for safeguarding contact details

MASH multi agency safeguarding hub / Children Services Department Professional Helpline

– 0300 555 1384

Out of hours 03005551373

Hants.gov.uk interagency referral form (IARF)

Hantsdirect - referral and assessment -0845 603 5620 / out of hours service 0845 600 4555

Local Authority Designated Officer Mark Blackwell - 01962 876364

Hampshire Safeguarding children's Partnership website: www.hampshirescp.org.uk

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 (under revision 2012)
- What to do if you are 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)
- Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa.gov.org.uk
- <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Safeguarding Children (2010)