



October 2021

Safeguarding Children Policy

Policy Statement

This organisation recognises its key statutory duty to safeguard children who attend its services. Everyone employed by the service has a responsibility in relation to child safeguarding. This includes staff being aware of the potential risks of abuse and raising any concerns to their line manager.

In this regard, the organisation recognises the definition of safeguarding adopted in statutory guidance:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The organisation recognises the importance of good leadership in establishing a culture of safeguarding and of ensuring that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are followed by all staff. At all times, the organisation will seek to take a child-centered approach where the needs of the child are put first.

The Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that children in this setting feel "protected and safe" at all times
- establish a positive culture of safeguarding
- ensure that staff are clear about the procedures to follow where they are concerned about the safety of a child
- raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse
- provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison
- identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk.

Guidance

The organisation recognises that it must have regard to all relevant statutory and best practice guidance on child safeguarding. In this regard, staff and managers are expected to be aware of the requirements of the following guidance:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children — A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children* (July 2018), HM Government
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education — Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges* (September 2021), Department for Education
- *Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings* (August 2021), Ofsted
- *The Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (April 2021) HM Government
- *What to Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused — Advice for Practitioners* (March 2015), Department for Education.

Managers and practitioners should also be aware of and follow any professional guidance that applies to their roles.

Procedure

In order to safeguard children, this organisation will:

- embed a positive culture and ethos where safeguarding is considered as a key part of everyday life in the setting
- empower staff to deliver a strong, robust, and proactive response to child safeguarding that reduces the risk of harm or actual harm occurring
- ensure that staff are clear about procedures where they are concerned about the safety of a child
- adopt child safeguarding procedures and guidelines as recommended by our local safeguarding partners
- work closely with the safeguarding partners and engage fully in local strategies and processes, including those related to learning from reviews
- implement appropriate procedures and audit their effectiveness
- raise awareness with staff that concerns about the welfare of a child and child protection are taken seriously, with appropriate action being taken
- create an environment where children are listened to and their concerns taken seriously
- ensure a timely response to any safeguarding concerns
- practice effective multi-agency working to help plan support around a child
- share information with other agencies on a need-to-know basis
- involve parents and children, except where doing so would put the child at greater risk of harm
- ensure that children are protected from all forms of potential abuse, including bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination
- follow safer recruitment guidance and procedures which includes the vetting of all new staff

- provide effective staff management through access to supervision, support and training
- review this policy at regular intervals to ensure it is updated and informs day-to-day practice.

Designated Person

The designated person is Fiona Roberts for our Lower Covey setting or Stef Barker for our Pear Tree setting. Their role is to help co-ordinate any concerns that are raised regarding the welfare of a child and to liaise with other professionals where appropriate, including the local authority social care for children.

The designated person will:

- co-ordinate action within the provision and liaise with social care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- act as a source of advice within the provision
- ensure that staff are familiar with the provision's policy and procedure
- make child protection referrals, recording and reporting accordingly
- liaise with agencies about individual cases
- organise training on child protection and safeguarding children within the provision
- ensure that appropriate strategies for recording and reporting incidents are kept within the provision
- provide appropriate feedback to members of staff as and when necessary.

Managers and Senior Practitioners

In this organisation, it is recognised that the owner, managers, and senior practitioners have a key role in helping to set a positive culture where safeguarding is seen as a high priority and abuse in any form is not tolerated.

Staff

Staff should:

- be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy
- report any concerns immediately, where possible to the designated person
- consult with the designated person if in any doubt as to how to proceed
- make any necessary written records in an appropriate and timely way
- attend appropriate training and ensure that they are updated
- follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures.

Partnerships with Parents

It is important that the provision has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. However, the priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures may have different approaches to child rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined later in this policy.

Where possible, staff should work with and share information with parents. Permission for liaison and information sharing with outside agencies should be sought unless it places the child at risk. In these cases, it is preferable to seek advice from social care or make a child protection referral.

Guidance on Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but to act on any concerns and report these to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

Abuse might fall into the categories of:

- physical
- emotional
- sexual
- neglect.

In addition to the above, staff should also be alert to the risks of other specific safeguarding issues, including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- children missing education
- children missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- domestic violence
- drug misuse
- online abuse
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- hate crime
- “honour” based violence
- radicalisation

- human trafficking.

Note:

This list is not fully inclusive and staff should refer to appropriate statutory guidance such as *Working Together* or *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Staff should respond appropriately to signs and symptoms in a child which gives them cause for concern. These include:

- significant changes in children's behavior or appearance
- frequent mood changes
- deterioration in their general wellbeing
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse
- signs of neglect such as being unkempt
- comments children make which give cause for concern
- not wanting to go home
- seductive behaviour
- a child who is quiet and withdrawn
- a child who gives the impression of being unloved and unhappy.

More details on how to recognise signs of abuse are included in the staff handbook.

Policy on Dealing with Suspected Abuse

All staff should refer concerns to the designated person as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- consider the child's welfare as paramount
- believe the child and take them seriously
- remain calm and caring
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to them
- make notes of the conversation as soon as possible, using the child's own words
- explain what will happen next and who will be told.

Staff should not:

- promise confidentiality
- postpone the discussion until a different time
- interpret what they have been told
- probe or ask leading questions.

Where the staff member suspects that a child is being abused, they should:

- immediately tell their line manager or the designated person for safeguarding and child protection about their concerns
- make factual notes of what has occurred, using the child’s own words where relevant, and any action taken.

The designated person will follow the procedure below.

- Where possible, they will discuss concerns with the child and their parents and obtain agreement to making a referral to children’s social care unless this discussion would put the child at increased risk of significant harm.
- Seek professional advice if unsure about whether or not to talk to parents first.
- When a referral is made, agree what the child and parents will be told by whom and when. Inform the recipient of the referral what information has already been discussed with the child and their parents.
- If a telephone referral is made, it must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours. Children’s social care should acknowledge the written referral within one working day of receiving it, indicating the course of action chosen. If nothing has been heard back within three working days, contact children’s social care again.
- Under no circumstances confront the abuser. There is a risk of forewarning the abuser and compromising any investigation or prosecution.

Confidentiality

Relevant information about the protection of children must be shared with the investigative agencies, but only on a “need to know” basis.

Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Review

The policy will be subject to regular audit, monitoring and review.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____

Reporting a concern about a child

Suspicion or concern about the abuse or neglect of a child

Immediate risk to a child

Discuss with your manager

Consult with or refer to the designated lead person for safeguarding your issues/concerns

Refer to the relevant area or the Police

Remember: If you have a suspicion or concern about child abuse you should always take some consult, seek advice and take action

If the child lives in Dorset contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD):

Professional's Telephone Number and On-Call Out of Hours Service 24/7: 01305 228558

Families and Members of the Public Number: 01305 228866

If the child lives in Bournemouth, Christchurch or Poole contact the Children's Services First Response Hub:

Telephone: 01202 735046

Email: childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Out of Hours Teams on: 01202 738256 or email: childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Police Non-Emergency: Call 101

Policy Emergency: Call 999