

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding children

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, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

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 manager co-ordinates child protection issues.
- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.
- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2015) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard.

- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
- 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 Criminal Records 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 Criminal Record Bureau 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.
 - Volunteers must:
 - be aged 17 or over;
 - be considered competent and responsible;
 - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
 - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
 - be fully checked for suitability (via the Disclosure and Barring Service) if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 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. All visitors to our setting sign in our daily record book within 15 minutes of arrival
- 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. All of our doors are fitted with locks.

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) and the Care Act 2014.

Staff training

All staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures and have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training enables staff to identify signs of abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. These may include:

- significant changes in children's behaviour;
 - deterioration in children's well-being;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
 - children's comments which give cause for concern;
 - any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home; and/or
 - inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.
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- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.
 - In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and Local Authority Safeguarding procedures on responding to radicalisation.
 - We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and Local Authority Safeguarding procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
 - We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.

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 the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- 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 pre-school manager 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 Board.

- We report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Separate guidance is available on how to report using the LADO referral form. Contact lado@york.gscx.gov.uk (through secure email) or contact 01904 551783. (See LADO referral form and guidance.)
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- This information is documented in an Incident Record book and stored in the settings secure file.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

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 will take action;
 - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;

- 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 a confidential file which is kept securely and confidentially.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication 'Child Protection Record' contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the local 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're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).
- We keep a copy of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- We report to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) using the referral form. (See LADO referral form and guidance.)

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have a copy 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 wellbeing of children.

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- 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, 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 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 Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice:: Contact 01904 551 783. (See LADO referral form and guidance.)
- 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 committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson 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.

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 Disclosure and Barring Service 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 all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with volunteers.

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.

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, 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised HMG 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)
- 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 2008)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)

- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications:

- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision (2013)
- Employee Handbook (2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (2016)

This policy was reviewed and updated 2017/2018 – April 2018. The policy will be adopted at the next AGM.

All policies are reviewed on an annual basis before the September AGM.

Guidance on how to report to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

- Referrals must be made using the LADO referral form.
- Contact lado@york.gscx.gov.uk (through secure email) or contact 01904 551783. Jane Mowat is our LADO on 01904 555742/07984496352.

Local Authority Designated Officer

The Local Authority has a designated officers (**LADO**) to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police and other agencies
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

The role of the LADO is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works with children within the City of York. As such, all allegations and concerns must be reported to the LADO (see below).

The LADO will maintain a database of all allegations and concerns received and will provide reports to the CYSCB at least annually or on request.

The LADO will advise, in discussion with the the Senior Manager within the Organisation (SMO), on what action should be taken by the employer and whether the matter should be referred to Children's Social Care and the Police for a decision on whether to convene a strategy meeting or an initial evaluation meeting.

Contact

If you wish to make an allegation or you have a concern about a professional working with children, young or vulnerable people, a referral should be sent to the Local Authority Designated Officer using the **LADO Referral Form**, giving as much detail as possible. Completed LADO Referral Forms should be emailed using secure mail (e.g. gcsx, pnn, cjsm, nhs.net, etc.) to lado@york.gcsx.gov.uk **If you do not have secure email please contact 01904 551783 to make your referral or to seek advice.**

Scope

These procedures should be followed by all organisations that provide services for children or young people or provide staff or volunteers to work with or care for children or young people. These procedures should also be applied to foster carers and prospective adopters.

The scope of these procedures is not just for those cases relating to significant harm and should be applied in all circumstances where an allegation is made or a concern arises that any person who works or has worked with children, in a paid or unpaid capacity, has, towards any child:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children

Allegations may arise in a number of ways from a number of sources e.g. a concern, suspicion, complaint or report from a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; information arising from a disciplinary, criminal or s47 child protection investigation.

It should be noted that all agencies should have internal procedures for dealing with allegations against employees, volunteers, foster carers and prospective adopters (as relevant) that comply with these procedures.

Concern about a Child

If you have a safeguarding concern for a child in your school or setting, or any other child you may know of or have contact with, this should be referred in the usual way to Children's Social Care on: Tel: 01904 551900 (Option 2 and then Option 3 to speak to a social worker).

If a child is in immediate danger, please dial 999.

If you urgently need to speak to a social worker outside office hours, before 8.30am or after 5.00pm, at weekends and on public holidays, please contact the Emergency Duty Team:

Tel: 01609 780780 or e-mail: edt@northyorks.gov.uk

Advice about School Safeguarding Arrangements

Advice and support is provided by the Schools' Safeguarding Adviser, Caroline Williamson (01904 555694). In Caroline's absence please speak to a member of the Advice Team: 01904 551900 (Option 2 and then Option 2 to speak to a member of the Advice Team).

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