

# Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

## Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people\* and vulnerable adults. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

*Ashurst Wood Pre-school DSL's stay updated of the local safeguarding trends by us regularly checking the West Sussex Safeguarding Partnership Website. We actively look for training updates, serious case reviews and annual reports. This helps us to remain vigilant to risks that we may be exposed to within the setting and action these as quickly as possible.*

## 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.

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- Our designated person who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is: [Lauryn Page \(Manager\) Shannon Brailey and Kate Coffey](#).
- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy Safeguarding officer is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- The designated person and the suitably trained deputy safeguard officer ([Shannon Brailey and Kate Coffey](#)) ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regards to safeguarding.
- The designated person and deputy understand safeguarding procedures, attends relevant training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility and work to minimise safeguarding risks constantly throughout the day whilst children are in their care. This includes personal hygiene routines – ensuring children are not at risk during nappy changes, Un/dressing, etc. Staff are discouraged from undressing children unnecessarily.
- 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 are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*) 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 the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the safeguarding partners.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies such as Ofsted where there are safeguarding concerns or investigations.
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- 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 and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
- 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 cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work. Staff are also aware of their obligation to safeguard themselves and ensure they abide by our 2 staff minimum requirement at all times, when children are on site.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children and staff are placed on the update service for regular checks.
- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
- Volunteers must:
  - 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 if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- Information is recorded 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; and
  - details of who obtained it.
- All staff and volunteers are informed 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).
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour and conduct when at work.
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service 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.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Steps are taken 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. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present unless with permission from the Manager or Deputy for outings or evacuations only.
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place.
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
- The designated person and deputy will offer each other advice, guidance, supervision and support

- The designated person and deputy will at the first opportunity inform each other of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care, or where appropriate, the IFD, LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations 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) and the Care Act 2014.

### *Responding to suspicions of abuse*

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- 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, 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 understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
- We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children's social work services
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services.
- 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.
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care team.
- We are prepared to take action if we/I have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take 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 LSCB 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.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- The designated person completes online Prevent (including Channel) training and attends local WRAP (workshop to raise awareness) training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, practitioners and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.
- 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.
- If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children's board social services and/or police.
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
- 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 and child in need concerns and follow the LSCB procedures, or when they come into force replacing the LSCB, we will follow the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners.
- Where such indicators are 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.
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
- We refer concerns about children's welfare to the local authority children's social care team 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 (or the local safeguarding partners when their published safeguarding arrangements take over from the LSCB).

- We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way [we/I] speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them). Staff are encouraged to wave over an additional member of staff where possible to witness the remainder of the conversation.
- 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 or neglect 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 in an age appropriate way, 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.
- All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
- All staff know that they can contact the **NSPCC whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285** if they feel that an organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place and all contact numbers displayed in the office.

#### *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, 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 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, and always within one working day.

- Where the Local Safeguarding partners safeguarding procedures 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 Board.

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

If you are a professional worker with information or concerns about a child you should inform West Sussex County Council's **Integrated Front Door** during office hours on the numbers below.

**Telephone: 01403 229900**

Or email: [wschildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:wschildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk)

We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### ***Escalation process***

- If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the Safeguarding escalation process.
- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.
- We will follow local procedures published by the safeguarding partners to resolve professional disputes.

### ***Informing parents***

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk or may interfere with the course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances police, where necessary.
- Parents are informed 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.
- The settings Designated Safeguarding Leader will contact integrated Front Door and follow their advice. Where the family is already known to Early Help or Mash this information will be passed on to add to the families case through the Integrated Front Door Process.
- 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 procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.



### *Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working*

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners guidelines.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and 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 and concerns about children's welfare, 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 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.

Free helpline service to speak to an NSPCC counsellor 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

***This Policy works along the principles of our Allegations Made Against and Concerns of Staff Policy.***

### **Legal framework**

#### *Primary legislation*

- Keeping Children safe in Education
- Protection of Children Act
- The Children Act - Section 11
- Children and Social Work Act
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act
- Childcare Act
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018

#### **Other useful publications**

- Safeguarding Children
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision

\*A 'young person' is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer or parent.

This policy was adopted by

Ashurst Wood Community Pre-School  
Lauryn Page (Manager)  
Charlotte Tester (Chair)

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