

Mitchell Walk Playgroup

Child Protection Policy

Statement of intent

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

It is everyone's duty to ensure the protection of all children. Should we become aware of anything that causes us concern with regard to any child in our care, we are morally bound to follow child protection policy.

In accordance with the key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance policy for safeguarding children.

- We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm.
- We are 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 are worried a child is being abused' (DoH 2004).
- We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues through training and learning programmes for staff and aim to include parents or carers who use our setting. We are also committed to empowering our young children, through the early year's foundation stage curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Aims

Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

- creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background;
- encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
- helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

The legal framework for this work is:

Primary Legislation

The Children Act 1989 - s 47

Data Protection Act 1998

The Protection of Children Act 1999

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)

Secondary Legislation

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations

Human Rights Act (1999)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised 1999)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) HMSO

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in education 04217-2006 BKT-EN

The Framework for the Assessment of children in Need and Their Families (2000)

What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused (2004)

The Common Assessment Framework 2005

Child abuse: Reporting to the OCYPS: Cambs LSCB (2007)

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidelines for Day-care Providers
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DOH 2004) for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- To contact the LSCB for advice or to make a referral:

Children's Social Care Services: Buckinghamshire County Council:

Tel Mon - Fri

Out of Hours Service: Buckinghamshire Office of Young People's Services on Tel:

01494 675802 01494 475037

- We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) can be contacted on 0808 800 5000
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social services department, we act within the LSCB guidance. They will decide whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Key Commitment 1

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm.

Method

Staffing and volunteering

- We will designate member(s) of staff who will co-ordinate child protection issues.
- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is The Committee Chair
- We provide 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. This includes people who want to volunteer to work in the setting.
- 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.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act 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 child protection concern.
- We record the details of visitors to the setting in a visitor's book.
- 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. These include locks to the external door of the facility that will be in place during playgroup hours. A bell is located outside this door to alert staff of the arrival of anyone to the setting.

Planning

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

Key Commitment 2

We are 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 are worried a child is being abused' (DoH 2004.)

Method

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 abuse, 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 concerned practitioner makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Child Protection Officer and Committee Chair. The information is stored in the Child Protection folder, never in the child's personal file.
- Where there are suspicions of abuse, staff in the setting take care to be attentive, calm, reassuring and non-judgemental.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents are given our complaints procedure which explains how to complain about staff or volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the Buckinghamshire County Council "Guidance for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against all Adults Working With and Looking After Children in Early Years and Childcare Settings" when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer 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 team to investigate.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay 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 a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children Act List /List 99.

Key Commitment 3

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues through training and learning programmes for staff and parents or carers who use our setting. We are also committed to empowering young children, through our early year's foundation stage curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to (please see the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum in the setting for more details).

Method

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and neglect and so 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.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection 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 understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff follows the guidance in "Recognising Signs of Child Abuse and What to do" which includes:

- offering reassurance to the child;
- listening to the child; and
- reassurance is given that she or he will take action.

Never promise not to tell.

The member of staff does not question the child

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff will make an internal record of:

1. the child's full name;
2. the child's date of birth;
3. the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
4. an objective record of the observation or disclosure;
5. the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
6. the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
7. the name of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the Child Protection Folder

- Concern forms will follow the child to their next setting marked clearly for the attention of the Designated Child Protection Teacher or Officer

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- 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 LSCB does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or the abuse is sexual. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know at the discretion of the Child Protection Officer. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

Support to families

- The setting believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting makes clear to parents its 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 social services department.
- The setting continues 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 social services department in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the 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 procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSBC.

This Child Protection Policy was adopted at a meeting of Mitchell Walk Playgroup held on

Date:

Signed on behalf of the Mitchell Walk Playgroup Management Committee:

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Name:

Role:

To be reviewed on (date):

This policy was reviewed / updated on

Date:

Signed on behalf of the Mitchell Walk Playgroup Management Committee:

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