

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy



Policy statement

Pre-School 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, namely:

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.
2. The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents 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' (HMG 2006)
3. The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programs 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.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

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.

Staffing and volunteering

- We have a designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues and this is:

Val Lyden (Pre-School Supervisor)

- Our designated officer (a Committee member) who oversees this work is:

Ally Wenham (Chair)

- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within Pre-School 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.
- All applicants for work within Pre-School will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least one reference. All such references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.
- All appointments will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless Pre-School is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.
- 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 Pre-School or has access to the children.
- Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.
- 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 led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to Pre-School.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into Pre-School so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

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 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 keyworker makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Supervisor or '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 Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We use the detailed procedures and reporting format contained in the Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication 'Child Protection Record for use in Early Years Settings' when making a referral to children's social care or other appropriate agencies.

Disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives 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:
 - offers reassurance to the child;
 - listens to the child;
 - gives assurance that she or he will take action.
 - The member of staff does not question the child.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Staff make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the child's name, address and age;
 - 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.

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.
- All members of staff are familiar with the Alliance's Child Protection Record and follow the procedures for recording and reporting.

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 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 bodies

- 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 Pre-School 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 Pre-School, 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 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 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.
- Our policy is for the Chair to 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 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 Pre-School 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 Pre-School.

Planning

- The layout of Pre-School allows for constant supervision of all children. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

- Only staff members will take children unaccompanied to the toilet and any nappy changes or assistance with toileting needs will be witnessed by a second member of staff and recorded for the parent's information and acknowledgement.

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 an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within Pre-School 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 Pre-School.
- 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 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 Pre-School'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 Policy 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)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1999)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equalities Act (2006)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

Further Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised HMG 2006)
- What to do if you're 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 (2006)
- 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: Practitioners' Guide (HMG 2006)
- Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa.gov.org.uk

Adoption of Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	_____	name of setting
Held on	_____	(date)
Date to be reviewed	_____	(date)
Signed on behalf of the Committee	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. Chair)	_____	
<i>[Policy 1.2]</i>	_____	