



Child Protection Policy

Written by: Wendy Precious

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Reviewed: March 2017, March 2018, March 2018, March 2019, March 2020, Nov 2021, April 2022, May 2023

Reviewed and amended: April 2022 (Simone Pattison),

Next review date: March 2024

Policy Statement

At Mulberry Pre-School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming environment underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk and believe that they are listened to.

Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, students, volunteers and committee members with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our Pre-School, and to inform parents and guardians how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.

Specific guidance is available to staff within the procedure documents.

Definitions

Within this document:

Child Protection is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

The term **staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the Pre-School, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes parents and committee.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. On the whole, this will apply to children of our Pre-School; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments.

Parent refers to both birth parents and other adults in a parenting role for example adoptive parents, step-parents, guardians and foster carers.

Abuse could mean neglect, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or any combination of these. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts and / or failure to provide proper care. Explanations of these are given within the procedure document.

Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and ensuring they meet their statutory responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the Pre-School.
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children.

Principles and Values

- Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- All staff have a key role in prevention of harm and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that they may indicate a child is at risk of harm, either in the school or in the community, whilst taking into account any contextual safeguarding.
- We acknowledge that it is essential that we work in partnership with other agencies that protect children and reduce risk and so we will engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.
- Whilst the Pre-School will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Children's Social Care or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.

Leadership and Management

We have established clear lines of accountability, training and advice to support the process of child protection and individual staff within that process.

In this Pre-School, any individual can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their Deputy (DDSL) if they have concerns about a child or young person.

The DSL is Simone Pattison and the DDSL is Rachel Duncombe. There is a nominated safeguarding committee member, Neil Scott, who will take responsibility for safeguarding. The Chair of the committee, Neil Scott will receive reports of allegations against the Manager and act on behalf of the committee.

As an employer follow safer recruitment guidance as set out in KCSIE 2022.

Training

All staff in our Pre-School are expected to be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and must be able to respond appropriately. Face to face training is provided as required through Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Workforce Development Team at least every 3 years. The DSL and DDSL will attend training at least every other year to enable them to fulfil their role. The DSL and DDSL will also attend DSL support meetings held by Hampshire County Council each term.

Any update in national or local guidance will be shared with the staff in staff meetings. This policy will be updated during the year to reflect any changes brought about by new guidance.

Referral

Following any concerns raised, the DSL will assess the information and consider if significant harm has happened or there is a risk that it may happen. If the evidence suggests the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm has been reached, or it is not clear if the threshold has been met, the DSL will contact Children's Social Care and, if appropriate, the police. If the DSL or DDSL is not available or there are immediate concerns, the staff member will refer directly to Children's Social Care and the police if appropriate. We will use the guidance form NSPCC to determine when to contact the police.

Generally, the DSL will inform parents prior to making a referral. However, there are situations where this may not be possible or appropriate, particularly when informing parents, may place the child at further risk.

***N.B.** The exception to this process will be in those cases known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for staff to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.*

Confidentiality

- We maintain that all matters relating to child protection are to be treated as confidential and only shared as per the 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' (DfE 2015) guidance.
- There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.
- Information will be shared with individuals within the Pre-School.
- All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure confidential.

Dealing with allegations against staff

If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff, this information will be recorded and passed to the Manager (Simone Pattison). The Manager will make an

assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation'. The local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all allegations and the relevant guidance will be followed. If the Manger needs advice or any guidance, they will contact the LADO. If the allegation is made against the Manager, or the person is not known, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO directly. The committee chairperson will also be notified at the earliest opportunity.

Dealing with allegations against children

If a concern is raised that there is an allegation of a child abusing another child within the Pre-School, the 'Peer on Peer Abuse' guidance will be followed.

Legal context

Children Act 2004 & 1989

Guidance

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols and guidance and their procedures (HSCP)

Working Together To Safeguard Children (2018)

Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) (2022)

FGM Act 2003 Mandatory Reporting Guidance (2016)

Policy Review

As a Pre-School, we review this policy at least annually in line with DfE, HSCP, and HCC requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

Manager to sign and date_

SCPattison 09/05/2023