HALESFIELD DAY NURSERY | POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1.3 Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Our nursery believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm.

The nursery's safeguarding procedures comply with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership. The nursery has a duty to contact Family Connect if we have concerns for a child's welfare. We will normally contact parents/carers prior to speaking to Family Connect unless it is felt that this action would significantly increase the risk to the child.

Our Designated Safeguard Lead who co-ordinates child protection issues is:

Jackie Morris (Deputy Manager)

Our Designated Safeguard Deputies are:

Helen Childs (Nursery Manager)

Brogan Reynolds

Jennifer Bailey

Leanne Northwood

Our Designated Safeguard Lead Trustee who oversees this work is:

Vicky Aston-Hicks

A designated safeguarding lead or suitably trained deputy will be available to staff during opening hours, on site or contactable without delay. If unavailable, staff must not delay urgent safeguarding action or a referral.

Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse manifests itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so, such as child on child abuse.. All staff will be vigilant to signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. Staff will also be vigilant to signs of

domestic abuse, which can have a significant impact on the behaviour and wellbeing of a child.

Signs for concern

Physical abuse – Children with frequent injuries; children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones and children with unexplained bruises or cuts; burns or scalds, or bite marks.

Emotional abuse – Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong; parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child; parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

Sexual abuse and exploitation – Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age; children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have; children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games and children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital or anal areas.

Neglect – Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe; children who are left hungry or dirty; children who are left without adequate clothing; children who are living in dangerous conditions; children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm; children who fail to receive basic health care; and parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

It is also worth noting that abuse can include Child-on-child abuse, this can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

More information can be found in "what to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners".

Staff Support and Training

The nursery is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of safeguarding through the provision of support and training to staff, and will ensure that:

All staff, students and volunteers are recruited and supervised in line with current EYFS suitability requirements, including identity checks, verified references and appropriate enhanced DBS checks. New employees must not start work before the

required criminal records check is received; volunteers must have the required enhanced DBS check, including where supervised.

• All staff and volunteers are directed to this *Safeguarding Children and Child Protection* policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.

• All staff receive regular training and supervision in safeguarding issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance. The staff training plan ensures that training is renewed annually or as appropriate.

• All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.

• All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.

• All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the nursery deputy manager as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation of abuse relates to the behaviour of the nursery deputy manager, then the nursery manager or a trustee should be informed.

• The nursery will take appropriate action on the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers.

• Any member of staff, student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Recruitment

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 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.

Where applications are rejected because of obtaining 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 DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

We apply the current childcare disqualification requirements and seek advice where suitability or disqualification concerns arise. Disqualification by association does not generally apply to staff working in non-domestic nursery settings.

Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

We record in our central file, information 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.

We inform all staff 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).

We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) 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 a child protection concern.

We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.

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.

We take steps 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.

We understand that we must notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises.

Dealing with concerns

The nursery is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of safeguarding by treating any concerns or allegations seriously and sensitively. The acting designated lead will:

• Keep a dated record of any concerns staff have about a child, together with any actions taken, or discussions that result from these concerns.

• Keep a dated record of any injuries a child has that are outside of the normal range, and draw them to the attention of the carer, if possible, on the day noted.

- Keep a dated record of any injuries the child sustains whilst at nursery, the circumstances in which they occurred, any action taken and advise the carer the same day.
- Ensure that records are confined to factual observations.

Safeguarding records are signed and dated by the person making the record and stored securely. Parents are informed and involved where safe and appropriate; their signature is not required on confidential safeguarding records.

- Consult with Family Connect if they need advice about how to deal with concerns about children whom they think may be in need or who could be at risk.

Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers or Other Adults — procedure

1. Report immediately. Any allegation or concern about an adult working or volunteering at the nursery must be reported immediately to the nursery manager or designated safeguarding lead. If the concern involves the manager or deputy manager, report it to the safeguarding trustee, Vicky Aston-Hicks, or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff may contact the LADO directly if necessary.

2. Keep children safe. Take immediate action to protect any child at risk. Call 999 if a child is in immediate danger and contact children's social care where appropriate. Do not delay urgent protective action while seeking management advice.

3. Record accurately. Write a factual, dated and signed account promptly, including the exact words used where possible, the people involved and any immediate action taken. Keep the record securely and share it only with those who need to know. Do not promise confidentiality to a child.

4. Consult the LADO. The manager or safeguarding trustee will contact the LADO without delay and within one working day where an allegation indicates that an adult may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against or related to a child, or may pose a risk of harm to children or be unsuitable to work with children. Seek LADO advice if unsure whether the threshold is met. Do not interview witnesses, investigate the allegation internally or confront the adult before receiving advice, except for immediate safety measures.

5. Manage the allegation fairly. Follow LADO, police and children's social care advice about informing the adult and parents, preserving evidence, supervision, temporary alternative duties or suspension. Suspension is not automatic. Keep appropriate confidential records and follow the nursery disciplinary procedure when applicable.

6. Notify Ofsted. Notify Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable and within 14 days of allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working or looking after

children on the premises, and other incidents that meet statutory notification requirements. Do not wait for an investigation to conclude or delay referrals to the LADO, police or children's social care.

7. Follow up and refer where required. Cooperate with safeguarding investigations, support the child and family appropriately, record decisions and outcomes, and consider whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or another professional body is legally required.

Lower-level concerns. Concerns about adult conduct that do not appear to meet the LADO threshold must still be reported to the manager or safeguarding trustee, recorded and addressed promptly under the staff code of conduct. Seek LADO advice if the threshold is uncertain or patterns of concern emerge. Staff can raise concerns through the whistleblowing procedure if they believe concerns are not being dealt with appropriately.

Further guidance refer to "safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations".

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.

We inform parents 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.

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 guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.

This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the social workers will inform parents.

Referring Allegations to Family Connect

If the acting designated lead has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been – or is in grave danger of being – subject to abuse, the following procedure will be activated:

Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the local Family Connect department, using the numbers detailed below.

The acting designated lead will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by Family Connect and the police.

At all times, the safety, protection and interests of children concerned will take precedence. The designated leads and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.

The nursery will assist the Family Connect and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.

Ofsted will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable, and within 14 days, of allegations of harm by anyone living, working or looking after children on the premises, and other notifiable safeguarding events as required by the current EYFS. LADO and police/social care referrals must not be delayed while notifying Ofsted.

Key Contacts

To make a child protection referral or discuss concerns about a child:

Telford and Wrekin

Safeguarding Partnership, Family Connect: 01952 385385

Out of hours: 01952 676500

Shropshire

Safeguarding Community Partnership: 03456789021

Child Protection Team Duty Desk: 0300 333 3000

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, then dial 999 and ask for police assistance.

If allegations are made about a member of staff or other adult at the nursery, then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted on 01952 385385

To report allegations to Ofsted:

General contact line: 0300 123 1231

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 Partnership.

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, information sharing, 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 Partnership.

Extra guidance can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/female-genital-mutilation 16

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69c2c4ce380a2a73a7cf9df4/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026.pdf

The 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act places a duty on early years providers "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" (the Prevent duty): www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-englandand-wales 19 Under section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 20

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-inearly-years-settings-online-safety-considerations