

# CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
  - work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

## *Liaison with other bodies*

We work within the Area Children Boards Child Protection Procedure guidelines.

We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well-being of children.

We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.

If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the Area Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

## Methods

### *Staffing and volunteering*

The named person who co-ordinates child protection issues at the Ascot Campus is **Rachel Terry**

The named person who co-ordinates child protection issues at the Priestwood Campus is **Agata Payne**

The named person who co-ordinates child protection issues at the Crowthorne Campus is **Emma Gray**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the school are clearly informed of the need to carry out enhanced DBS checks before posts can be confirmed. 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 police checks for staff and volunteers to ensure that no disqualified person works at the school or has access to the children.
- 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 have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the school.
  - We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. The designated person, the suitably trained deputy and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
  - The designated person (and the person who deputises for them) understands LSCB safeguarding procedures, attends relevant LSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.

- 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, and we discuss this regularly at staff meetings.

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.

- 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*, 2018) and can identify those children and families who may need 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 LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, 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 where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns if 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), whistle blowing and dignity at work.
- 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.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 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.
- 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 aged 17 or over;
  - 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.
  - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate.
  - 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).
- From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are **not** required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children in accordance with the Childcare Disqualification and Childcare Regulations 2018, and Disqualification under the Childcare Act guidance effective from 31 August 2018.
- 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 outlined in the employee handbook.
- 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. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
- Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO.
- 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 officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision, and support.
- The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern; however, this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care or where appropriate the LADO, OFSTED or RIDDOR.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed from the school or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Child Health administrators so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

### **Training**

The designated person will ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Protection Procedures as outlined in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" 2021.

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. We also ensure that all staff are made aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the school. Little Acorns will ensure that all staff receive appropriate training.

### **Planning**

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group doors are left ajar.

### **Curriculum**

We introduce key elements of child protection into our foundation stage curriculum, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create within the school a culture of value and respect for the individual.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of development of our children.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones may be used in settings if their use is appropriate. The use of a mobile phone will not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children. Mobile phones have a place in settings, especially those without a landline or if the landline is unpredictable. They can often be the only means of contact and helpful in ensuring children are kept safe. The safety of children in childcare provision is paramount. Casual use of mobile phones is not appropriate when caring for children and staff are made aware of this and all personal mobile phones are locked away during school hours.

## Complaints

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or a volunteer action within the school. See 'Complaints Procedure'.

We follow the guidance as issued by Bracknell Forest Borough Council when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

We also follow the procedures as stated in, 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. D.H et al, 2003.

## Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will immediately talk to **the named person for that site**.

They will first collate information and then contact;

MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) – **01344-352005** Emergency  
Duty Team – **01344-786543**

A record will be made of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- The age of the child;
- The date and time of the observation or disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; The names of any other person present at the time

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

In the event of a named person being absent, all managers will be familiar with the procedure they must follow, and all other staff will know who to talk to if a problem occurs.

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We ensure that all staff understand 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 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 Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP 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, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early year's 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 social work service 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 is 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.

- If 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 of 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 when they come into force replacing the LSCB 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 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.
- 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 know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that or 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.
- 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.
- We have a whistle blowing policy in place.
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistle blowing dilemmas.

## **Informing Parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report, except where the guidance does not allow for this. In these cases, a parent is the likely abuser. Here the investigating officers will inform the parents.

## **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 Berkshire Children Boards.

## **Support to families**

The school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group. The school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

## **Little Acorns Child Protection Statement**

Rachel Terry or manager on the day is the designated person responsible for child protection at Little Acorns Ascot Campus.

Agata Payne or manager on the day is the designated person responsible for child protection at Little Acorns Priestwood Campus.

Emma Gray or manager on the day is the designated person responsible for child protection at Little Acorns Crowthorne Campus.

All staff at Little Acorns are committed to the protection of children within their care.

Parent's attention will be drawn to our Child Protection policy and procedure during the registration period and a copy will be made available.

Staff will record any child entering the school who has any prior injuries in the incident book which parents will be asked to sign.

Staff will follow the Child Protection procedures as laid down in the guidance and in accordance with the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' summary, (flow chart displayed on notice board).

It is the responsibility of all staff to report any concerns or worries they may have to the named person at their site, or the manager on duty that day.

Worries and concerns will be discussed with parents except in the case of Sexual abuse or where it could put the child or other person at risk, or evidence being lost or destroyed.

Confidentiality and a regard to the Data Protection act will be adhered to at all times.

In the event of an allegation against a staff member the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards Child Protection Procedure will be followed, and OFSTED will also be informed.