

## **Safe-Guarding Children Policy and Procedures**

The term safeguarding incorporates a range of measures including child protection procedures. It encompasses a preventative approach to keeping children safe that incorporates child health and safety; behaviour and preventing bullying; supporting children with medical conditions; personal, health, social economic education; providing first aid and site security.

Consequently, this policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the committee of the playgroup and should be read in alongside the following policies:

Prevent Policy

E safety

ICT and Mobile technologies policy

Photography Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Child friendly anti bullying

Whistleblowing policy

Complaints

Staff Code of Conduct

Physical Conduct Code.

Data Protection Policy

Lost Child Policy

Disciplinary policy

COVID-19 - Implementing Protective Measures

Box Preschool playgroup staff and the committee are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here". Our Pre-School wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of all children and to give them the very best start in life.

The CHILD'S welfare is paramount.

Our aims are to:

1. Create an environment which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background.
2. Help children to establish and maintain satisfying relationships within their families, peers and other adults.
3. Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
4. Enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
5. Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

The legal framework for these aims is taken from the following publications:

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004

The Protection of Children Act 1999

The Children (NI) Order

The Children (Scotland) Order

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

Human Rights Act 1998

Data Protection Act 2018

The Education Act (2002)

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

The Equality Act (2010)

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015),

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)

The Revised Multi Agency threshold for safeguarding children (2014)

The Escalation policy for dispute resolution 2014 - SVPP

Multiagency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation - (April 2016)

Child Sexual Exploitation - (February 2017)

Procedures of Wiltshire Local Safeguarding Partner

Information Sharing - (2018)

### **Definition of Safeguarding**

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment;

- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstance consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **Definitions of abuse and neglect**

Abuse as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. All adults who work or volunteer with children should be able to identify concerns about child abuse. The four types of abuse are:

**Physical abuse** -a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**- the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** -involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education

**Neglect** -the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Specific safeguarding issues and Contextual Safeguarding:** Box Pre School Playgroup recognises other safeguarding issues: Contextual Safeguarding, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, bullying (including cyber-bullying), domestic violence, drugs, fabricated or induced illnesses, faith abuse, forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, gender-based violence/violence against women and girls, mental health, radicalisation, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking.

We will endeavour to identify and act upon any forms of abuse according to our procedures.

**Multi Agency Working** We recognise that we have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and we work with our three safeguarding partners to achieve this.

<http://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk>

We work within the local authority guidelines. We have a copy of Area Child Protection Guidelines available for parents/carers and staff to see.

We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident or changes in our arrangements, which affect the wellbeing of the children.

We have procedures for contacting the local authority on Child Protection issues, including maintaining a list of telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easier in an emergency, for ourselves and the social services to work well together. (see flow charts attached appendix 2)

We work with regard to the local authority 'escalation policy' (copy attached) should we be unhappy regarding a decision made by another agency.

Records of the local NSPCC contacts are also kept.

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/carers at the same time.

**Staffing, volunteering and safer recruitment:**

Our designated lead person who co-ordinates Child Protection issues is:

The designated lead (DSL) is Yvonne Jenkinson (Supervisor)

The deputy lead (DDSL) is Sarah Vick (Deputy Supervisor)

The chair represents the committee.

The lead or deputy is always available during opening times to discuss safeguarding issues with staff. However, in exceptional circumstances, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider taking advice from local children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children. All staff have a responsibility towards upholding safeguarding and have an attitude of "it could happen here." The designated lead or deputy is available during opening times should staff need to discuss a safeguarding issue.

Applicants for available posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are EXEMPT from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. We abide by the safer recruitment guidelines and we record who has attended this training. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Enhanced criminal record and barred list checks are carried out prior to a post being confirmed so that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting. Where applications are rejected because of disclosed information applicants have the right to know and to challenge any incorrect information. We also check mental and physical fitness, employment references, and the right to work in the UK. Committee members and volunteers are also checked through the Disclosure and Barring service.

We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, this ensures that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.

Volunteers do not work unsupervised at any time.

We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern. We will inform the Disclosure and Barring service of any staff/volunteer who resigns or is dismissed following 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 enters the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. Visitors are given a statement to read on entry to playgroup which asks them not to bring mobile phones into the setting or to give them to the supervisor to store in the cupboard; and not to enter the toilet area without letting a member of staff know. A member of staff will be present in the toilet area if a visitor is using the facilities.

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Where a parent or relative of a child receives a caution/conviction against children (or ex nursery staff), on the sex offenders register and therefore is disqualified from contact with or working with children, we do not allow them to enter the premises and we place an imaginary 10-meter perimeter around the area.

### **Role and Responsibility of the Designated Lead Person**

- act as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners;
- as required, liaise with the "case manager" and the designated officer(s) at the local authority for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member;
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies; and
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the education establishment when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- To recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral.
- Have a working knowledge of how local safeguarding partners operate, the conduct of a child protection conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the playgroup's child protection policy.
- Ensure all staff have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise.
- Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals and concerns.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher multi-agency training courses at least every two years.

### **Role of staff**

All staff are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.

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- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child.
- involved in the implementation of individual support plans, integrated support plans, child in need plans and interagency child protection plans as required.

### **Role of Committee**

As key strategic decision makers and vision setters for the playgroup, the committee will work closely with designated lead to make sure that our policies and procedures are in line with national and local safeguarding requirements. The publication Working together to safeguard children (2018) states "charity trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it".

### **Statutory Assessments**

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Staff should follow Wiltshire SVPP referral process - see appendix 2 flow chart

### **Record keeping**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing.

### **Disciplinary Action: (see also disciplinary policy)**

### **ALLEGATION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER**

Any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff, student placement or volunteer within Box Pre-School will be dealt within working day and reported to the Designated Officer for Allegations at MASH ( see flow chart). It should be done in a way that provides effective protection for children and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff or they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff. It is our policy that all allegations will be reported straight away, to the DSL/DDSL.

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This action will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff (including a volunteer, student) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children. This will include cases of verbal abuse.

There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- consideration by the Nursery of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify OFSTED, our Local safeguarding partner and Disclosure and Barring Service who will consider whether the individual should be added to the barred list.

### **Training:**

We ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training in line with our local safeguarding partner at induction. This training is regularly updated in accordance with our safeguarding partner's guidelines.

In addition, all staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, and at least annually.

### **Safer Working Practices**

We refer to the *SVPP Social Networking policy 2015* in relation to:

- Safer social media practice including personal use
  - Confidentiality
  - Social contact

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- Access to inappropriate images
- Internet usage using setting's equipment
- Cyberbullying -if the staff is a victim

#### **Planning:**

The lay out of the playroom allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend any time away from the group the door is left ajar.

#### **Curriculum:**

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

We create a culture of respect and value for each individual.

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

#### **Complaints:**

We ensure all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms-physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

When children suffer from physical, emotional or sexual abuse this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour and/or their play. Where such changes occur or where their play gives cause for concern, we will respond and refer accordingly. We may also contact the Duty Social Worker for advice on an informal basis.

Where a child shows signs and symptoms of "failure to thrive" or neglect, we may make appropriate referrals.

Any allegation of abuse against a member of staff, committee members or volunteers **MUST** be referred to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures but we do not have the power to investigate ourselves. Please see the attached flow chart which is displayed on the parent's and staff noticeboard. Allegations should be reported to the designated lead, Yvonne Jenkinson. If there is an allegation

against this person then allegations should be made to the deputy lead, Sarah Vick, or the Chair of the Committee. The telephone number for the designated officer is 01225 713945. Out of hours 0300 456 0100.

We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to or ask questions of the children. (See also our whistleblowing policy.)

### **Disclosures:**

#### **Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures:**

The staff follow the do's and don'ts guidelines (see appendix 1)

Staff make a record of and use the child protection concerns sheet to record concerns or incidents and to respond to a disclosure. This is then passed onto the DSL/DDSL.

The forms include:

- The child's name, age and address.
- The date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
- The exact words used by the child.
- A body map
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date, time and names of any other people present.
- These records are signed and kept in a separate confidential file.
- All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

The voice of the child is central to our safeguarding practice and children are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

Information about pupils at risk of harm is shared with members of staff on a "need to know" basis. The D/DSL makes a judgement in each case.

### **Information Sharing**

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be

mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children.

**The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.**

### **The seven golden rules to sharing information**

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not

have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up- to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

#### **Informing Parents:**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded parents/carers will be informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local safeguarding partner does not allow this such as when doing so would:

- place a child at increased risk of significant harm
- place an adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

In these cases, the investigating officers will inform the parents/carers.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will ensure as far as possible given the young age of the children in our care that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. We recognise that ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the **best** interests of the child at heart.

When we become aware that a child is being privately fostered, we remind the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care. We follow this up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

Parents are given the Wiltshire child protection leaflet and a copy of our safeguarding policy with their child's welcome pack.

**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 Area Child Protection Partner. Records are kept securely, in a locked location, under the child's name; away from the other records the designated lead and deputy have access to the records.

**Support to Families:**

- We take every step in our power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers.
- We continue to welcome any child and family whilst allegations of abuse are being investigated in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents/carers only if appropriate under the guidance of the local area safeguarding partners.
- 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.

**Children potentially at greater risk of harm**

**Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Our Local authorities will share the fact a child has a social worker with us and our designated safeguarding lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

**Mobile technologies and Cameras (see also ICT policy)**

Mobile phones are not permitted within the Pre-school room. Staff are permitted to use their mobile phones in the cupboard area, but the taking of

photographs on mobile phones is strictly prohibited anywhere in the Pre-school site. All visitors are requested to keep their phones in their bags during a visit. Smart watches should not be worn on playgroup premises.

The playgroup camera and tablets are kept in a prominent position in the playroom. They should never be taken into the toilet areas. The photos are printed off on the playgroup printer by the supervisor. No photos are stored on the tablets as they are immediately uploaded to the on-line journal site.

## **Guidance on specific safeguarding issues**

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise from other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

### **Domestic abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

**Operation Encompass** operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident

of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in the educational setting before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the educational setting has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

## **Peer on peer abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online
- sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery);
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

## **Looked after children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We ensure that our staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe and recognise that in particular we need to have information relating to the child's legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. We will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her.

### **Children with special educational needs and disabilities**

We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenge and that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

### **Unexplained absences**

Unexplained absences of 2 days or more for children on the child protection register will be reported to the local authority. Unexplained absences of 10 days or more for other children will be referred to the local authority.

### **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent.
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility.
- A close relative.
- A Local Authority.

for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Box Pre-school to inform the Local Authority where we

are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

Staff at playgroup need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of **FGM**, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM:

Knowing that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school;

The child may also talk about a special procedure/ceremony that is going to take place or a special occasion to 'become a woman'.

Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Indicators that FGM may already have occurred:

Prolonged absence from school or other activities with noticeable behaviour change on return, possibly with bladder problems;

Difficulty walking, sitting or standing, and look uncomfortable;

Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet

May complain about pain between their legs, or talk of something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.

There is a mandatory duty for teachers to report to the police any case of female genital mutilation on a girl under the age of 18.

### **Mental Health**

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-

to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

### **Early Help**

At Box Pre School playgroup whenever possible, we will ensure that early intervention is actioned via a referral to Early Help as soon as the criteria are met, to prevent situations to escalate into larger problems. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Therefore, the playgroup will consider the following:

- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help;
- Provide early help services e.g. health visitor, SENCO, children's centre, speech and language and two year and three and four-year-old funding.
- **Early Help Single Point of Entry: 01225 718 230**

Working together to Safeguard Children in Education 2020 highlights those who may potentially need early help as:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited

## **Box Pre-School Playgroup**

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- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

## **Early Help Assessments**

A lead practitioner should undertake an early help assessment, provide help to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and co-ordinate the delivery of support services. A GP, family support worker, school nurse, teacher, health visitor and/or special educational needs co-ordinator could undertake the lead practitioner role. Decisions about who should be the lead practitioner should be taken on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the child and their family. The DSL and SENCO will work with safeguarding partners to appoint a lead practitioner.

At Box Playgroup we will make assessments effective by working with the agreement of parents and involving the child and their wishes, if possible. We will discuss concerns with our local social worker. In cases where consent is not given we will consider how best the child's needs can be met.

If at any time it is considered that the child may be a child in need, as defined in the Children Act 1989, or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, we will make a referral immediately to our local authority children's social care.

## **COVID-19**

It is important that there is access to a DSL at all times and so in the event of a change to the DSL because of sickness this will be communicated to all staff by the DDSL.

Access to the DSL may be by telephone during the pandemic.

## **Working with and supporting vulnerable children**

The Government has published a definition what they consider to be a vulnerable child during the COVID 19 crisis. Vulnerable children therefore include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with plans. We know that not all vulnerable children will have statutory interventions in place already to determine this level of vulnerability.

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Increased risks for children will need to be considered as a result of them being at home more frequently and because for some, they will not have the usual support from themselves who are, teachers, practitioners support staff in schools and settings in general. Children and families will not have the same access to community provisions and support networks. As a result of isolation, children are more at risk regarding all categories of abuse and neglect but especially in relation to domestic abuse, child criminal exploitation and on-line dangers. Knowledge of children who are at risk or children whose welfare is compromised must always be acted upon and referred to the appropriate services for timely interventions. Working closely and liaising with multi-agency partners is extremely important especially during the COVID 19 period.

Our local outbreak management plan prioritised places for vulnerable children in the event of staffing shortages.

### **Children's attendance**

Any children for whom attendance at school or early years provision has been agreed, must be monitored. If those children identified as vulnerable yet are not attending, their absence will be followed up with parents and reported to the child's social worker.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The committee ensure that safeguarding is an agenda item on the for every committee meeting.

The supervisor ensures that safeguarding is an agenda item for every staff meeting.

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

## Appendix 1

### DOs and DON'Ts

#### when responding to a disclosure of abuse

##### **DO:**

- **create a safe environment by offering** the child a private and safe place if possible.
- **stay calm** and reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame.
- **tell** the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you.
- **listen carefully.**
- use the **'tell me', 'explain', 'describe'** and/or mirroring strategy.
- **tell** the child what you are going to do next.
- **tell only the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.**
- **record** in detail using the Welfare Concern Record without delay, using the child's own words where possible.

## **DO NOT:**

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the child to talk.
- take notes while the child is speaking.
- ask the child to write an account.
- interview the child and try to investigate the allegation yourself.
- ask another adult to witness the disclosure.
- promise confidentiality e.g. say you will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.