

Policy - Safeguarding and Child Protection

Title: Safeguarding and Child Protection

Category: Safeguarding Children

Review Date: 30th Aug 2024

Description:

Aim
Our Preschool's prime responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of all children in our care. We are committed to:

- Building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur.
- Promoting awareness of child abuse issues through our training.
- Complying with the local child protection procedures approved by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and making sure that all adults working with, and looking after children are able to put the procedures into practice.

Building a 'Culture of Safety' and Promoting Awareness

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Both DSL and assistant DSL are required to have Safeguarding Children Foundation Training, to enable them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect. This training is updated every two years.

The role and responsibilities of the DSL are:

- To liaise with the Local Authority and other agencies regarding child protection issues.
- To ensure the Preschool meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements (Section 3, Statutory Framework for the EYFS).
- To ensure policies are up to date and in line with Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) guidance and procedures.
- To collate information when there are concerns about a child.
- To ensure all staff have relevant safeguarding training, to enable them to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.
- To provide on-going advice, support, and guidance to the staff team.

A copy of 'Working together to Safeguard Children' and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for all staff to refer to.

The Prevent Duty

We are aware that, to be effective and lawful, we must meet specific legal duties including those arising from the Prevent Duty. This sets out the need for 'British/Fundamental Values' to help everyone live in safe and welcoming communities where they feel they belong.

British Values are defined as:

- Democracy.
- The rule of law.
- Individual liberty and mutual respect.
- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We will ensure that we share these values and that they are understood and applied by all staff, trustees and volunteers.

We will ensure that:

- We focus on children's personal, social, and emotional development, helping children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value other's views, understand similarities and differences between themselves and others and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.
- We are alert to harmful behaviours by influential adults in a child's life. This may include discriminatory and/or extremist discussions between parents, family and/or staff members.
- We endeavour to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalization and know what to do when they are identified.
- We assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism and work in partnership with local partners such as the police, Prevent Co-Ordinators, and our Local Safeguarding Team to take account of local risks, respond appropriately and make referrals if necessary if there are any concerns.

Staffing, Volunteering and Trustees

• Applicants for posts within the Preschool 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 before posts can be confirmed to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the Preschool or has access to the children. Should applications be rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- The Preschool require all members of staff, volunteers, and trustees to subscribe to the update service once their DBS has been received or renewed (the cost of this is reimbursed by Preschool). The DBS can then be checked by the Preschool Manager/DSL 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, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it.
- All staff, volunteers and trustees 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).

All staff, volunteers and trustees are required to notify the Manager or Trustee Chair immediately if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, court orders, reprimands and 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. Staff, Volunteers and Trustees sign a Suitability Self-Declaration Form annually.

• We ensure that safeguarding children and child protection are covered in our induction for staff and volunteers and are reviewed at staff meetings. We make staff aware that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary, or legal action will be taken.

• All staff are required to attend safeguarding children training every three years.

This helps them to recognize the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse (including domestic abuse), sexual abuse and neglect so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals

• We access the Surrey Area Safeguarding Children Partnerships Manual of Child Protection procedures online at <https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk> and make sure that all adults working with and looking after children are able to put the

procedures into practice.

- Staff have regular supervision sessions with the Manager to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement which includes the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.
- We ensure that we have a copy available of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' for parents, and staff are given this at induction and, when updated, are issued with an electronic copy.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about a child.
- We have a Whistleblowing Policy, which staff are required to read and familiarize themselves with. Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the DSL, Trustee Chair or relevant agency. Whistleblowing is acknowledged as an important aspect of safeguarding where staff, volunteers, Trustees and students are encouraged to share genuine concerns.
- 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 will 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.
- We have security measures in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the Preschool, so that no unauthorized person has unsupervised access to the children. We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the Preschool.
- Volunteer visitors and any paid visitors will not be left unsupervised with children.

Planning for Safeguarding

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision.
- Only staff who have been registered as 'a suitable person' (i.e. their enhanced DBS disclosure has been received) will take children to the toilet. Children are encouraged to use the toilet facilities themselves, but a member of staff may need to assist on occasion with intimate care, including the changing of nappies for some children. All intimate care is recorded in our daily toileting record book.
- Staff, volunteers, and visitors must always leave their mobile phones in the office. Staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone to contact parents, except in the event of an emergency. Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones to take images, video or audio of any child attending the Preschool, and are not permitted to wear smart watches with an inbuilt camera in Preschool.
- Staff may only photograph children using the Preschool devices. Images are not taken in the toilet/changing area (see mobile phones and camera policy).
- The Accident record (as referred to in the Accidents and Incidents Policy) is reviewed by the DSL and the deputy DSL at the end of each term, and they will action any necessary remedial measures.

How We Respond to Concerns

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations 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".
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms; physical, emotional (including domestic abuse), sexual and neglect. When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be 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
 - Changes in their appearance, their behaviour or their play
 - Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- We consider factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or 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 department.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation, internet abuse, Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation that may affect, or may have affected, children attending our Preschool.
- 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 may come into contact with them.
- The DSL must inform the Preschool Chair at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern. However, this should not delay any referrals being made to the children's social worker services, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), Ofsted or Riddor (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation).
- 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.
- 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 procedure below: -
The member of staff makes a dated record of the details of the concern at the earliest opportunity, including dates, time and location of disclosure and any potential witnesses. The member of staff discusses what to do with the DSL. The information is stored confidentially in the Child Protection folder. If there is a concern about a child we will normally share these concerns with parents/carers. However, if sharing these concerns puts the child at risk of significant or further harm we will seek advice from the Children's SPA (single point entry) team. If a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the DSL in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral the staff are aware that, because safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, that they can make a referral themselves.
- Staff must remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so they should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate themselves.
- All suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will

- Offer reassurance to the child.
 - Take the disclosure seriously.
 - Listen to the child.
 - Give reassurance that she or he will take action and that they are unable to keep it a secret.
 - Reassure the child that they are not at fault.
- The member of staff will not question the child or ask leading questions. The member of staff will not make promises that they cannot keep, jump to conclusions, speculate, or accuse anybody.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff will make a record of:

- The child's name and the age of the child.
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
- The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
- 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 will be kept in the Child Protection Folder and will not be accessible to people other than the DSL, deputy DSL, Chair and other members of staff as appropriate. The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' MUST be informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day.

Request for support

A request for support can be made by either phoning the Children's SPA (single Point Access) 0300 470 9100 or by filling out a request form and sending to cspa@surreycc.gov.uk SPA will contact us to inform us of action they have taken, and we can refer back to them if necessary. If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the Surrey Area Safeguarding

Children Partnership escalation process. Parents are normally the first point of contact; however the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to information sharing and in some instances we will be required to inform the relevant authorities before speaking to the parents. If there is a possibility that advising a parent first may place a child at greater risk the designated person will seek advice from Children's SPA (single point access) 0300 470 9100 and will record and follow the advice given.

If it is an emergency and / or a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, we will phone the Children's SPA 0300 470 910 (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm) Out of hours contact details 01483 517898 (Emergency Duty Team) or the Police (using 999).

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents and staff know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the Preschool, which may include an allegation of abuse (see our Complaints Policy).
- We will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working with or looking after children (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) and of the action taken in respect of these allegations. This will be done at the earliest opportunity, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- We will ensure that we maintain on-going contact and work with Ofsted and individual social workers within the Child Assessment Team. The DSL will also attend Child Protection Conferences, Core/Looked-After Meetings and court proceedings and provide written reports. The Preschool will also liaise with other professionals, health visitor, doctor, clinical and educational psychologists and therapists and implement an Individual Education Plan/Behaviour Management Plan if appropriate.
- We will respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person working on the premises which includes inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident in our Child Protection Folder. If the allegation relates to the DSL or the deputy DSL, then the Trustee Chair must be informed.
- If there is an allegation against a member of staff, we inform Surrey County Council's Local Authority Child Protection Designated Officer (LADO) 0300 123 1650 (select option 3) or by email: lado@surreycc.gov.uk or secure email: lado@surreycc.gcsx.gov.uk
- If there is an allegation against a member of staff, then the Manager/DSL will speak to the member of staff and explain that the allegations will be investigated. It is the Manager/DSL's responsibility to gather information where an allegation has been made against a member of staff. The Manager/DSL will need to work in collaboration with the LADO.
- It is the Trustee Chair's responsibility to gather information and deal with the investigation, if the allegation is against the Manager (DSL) or the deputy DSL. The Trustee chairperson will need to work in collaboration with the LADO.
- Ofsted must be informed as soon as reasonably possible (and a written report submitted) at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. Telephone 0300 123 300. If this requirement is not met and there is not a reasonable excuse, then an offence has been committed.
- We follow the guidance of the Surrey Area Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child. We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social service department to investigate.
- When the Trustees, Manager and social care team agree that it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff will be suspended on full pay 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.
- The LADO should normally be informed before the child's parents, as informing parents could impede the disciplinary or investigative process. However, if there is a reason for parents to know sooner, such as a child needing medical treatment or being harmed, then the parents should be informed first.
- The member of staff should be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the process. If the member of staff has been suspended, they should be kept up to date about events in the workplace, by the Manager or Trustee Chair. The member of staff must not contact or be contacted by members of the Preschool team, as this may impede the investigative process.
- The member of staff should be kept informed of progress, outcome, and implications of any disciplinary or related process.
- If we dismiss or remove a member of staff/volunteer from working at our Preschool because they have engaged in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), so that individuals who pose a threat to children can be identified and barred from working with these groups. If the member of staff resigns during an investigation or before they are dismissed, we must still inform the DBS.

Support to Families

- The Preschool believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
 - The Preschool makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and always liaising with the local social services department.
 - The Preschool will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
 - We will follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the Preschool's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, after 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 our Confidentiality and Access to Record procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- www.surreyscp.org.uk