



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

As an Ofsted regulated Pre-school, we comply with the local child Safeguarding procedures and it is our duty to record and report to children services any concerns regarding the possible abuse of children in our care (emotional, physical, sexual or neglect).

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of children in our care. As such, it is our duty to the children, parents/carers, and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child.

'Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Partners (LSB).'

Statutory Frame for the Early Years Foundation Stage, April 2023

Our Aim at Birchwood Pre-school

It is our aim to ensure that all the children receive the highest level of care, provision and education.

The health, safety and welfare of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our Pre-school. Our children have the **right** to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, background or disability. Children have the right to be safe within the Pre-school.

We are committed to:

- Building a "culture of safety" in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents 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*' (2015).
- Promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes.

- Empowering young children, through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their rights to be strong, resilient and listened to.
- Ensuring that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed.
- Ensuring a robust training system is in place, in which all staff are confident in the policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding and welfare of the children.

It is the policy of the Pre-school to provide a secure and safe environment for all children and to ensure that they are protected holistically. The Pre-school ensure all relevant checks and references are in place for all staff, and that all staff obtain enhanced DBS check certificates and all our staff will receive updated and relevant safeguarding training as part of their induction and as refresher training after their 12-week probation period.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is **Samantha Boone** and **Victoria Campbell** is the settings Deputy Safeguarding Officer and together they work to co-ordinate child protection issues. However, as a team we want to stress that safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults who come into contact with the children who attend the setting. This includes staff, parents and visitors.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a vast 'umbrella' and underneath are the processes that as Early Years educators we adhere to ensuring children are safe from harm.

It is inclusive of, but not limited to; the protection of children within setting from abuse and maltreatment, **including child protection, - this being the process of protecting a child identified as suffering from, or potentially suffering from, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.** Also, the recruitment of suitable people, medication, accidents, illness and emergencies, suitability of the premises and equipment, health and safety.

The term safeguarding as defined within the '*Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018) document means-

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Early Years Alliance (2021) define a set of key principles that underpin safeguarding to ensure the welfare and the happiness of the children as being;

- A child's needs should be put first — always.
- It's important to help and support children as early as possible before issues escalate and become more damaging (Early Help).
- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and everyone at a setting should act in a timely and coordinated manner to respond to any concerns about the welfare of a child.

WHAT IS ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse can come in different forms; these are Physical abuse, Neglect, Emotional Abuse or Sexual abuse.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse 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.

NEGLECT

Neglect is 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 as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide, adequate food and clothing, shelter, (including exclusion from the 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.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 are saying or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child in participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of

another, e.g. domestic abuse. It may involve serious bullying, including cyber-bullying, causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

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 (rape or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing or touching outside of clothing. They may 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

It is the policy at Birchwood Pre-school and After School Club, that all staff will call body parts by their correct anatomical name, i.e. penis, vagina etc. Children will also be encouraged to use this language.

There are many names that children call their "bits", by using correct names, there can be no ambiguity should a child make a disclosure of sexual abuse.

INTIMATE CARE

There are instances during the working day, when some children will require intimate care. E.g. nappy changing. To preserve the dignity of the child, this care will be undertaken by one adult in the changing area or the toilet area. They will ask the child's permission to help them and the adult will follow the procedures for nappy changing. The time that a child is changed is recorded and why; this is shared on our 'Family' app.

There are set areas to change a child within our building and all areas provide the required element of privacy for the child, whilst ensuring staff are fully visible. We do not put ourselves or the child in a situation of risk. When we are supporting a child in the toilet, ie changing after an accident or supporting them in cleaning themselves, the doors must remain open at all times within the toilet areas and the main doors must remain fully open to ensure staff remain visible.

Only staff that hold enhanced DBS check certificates can change the children, and this will only be once they have completed their 12 week induction period.

Procedures

During the time children spend in our care, we may witness, injuries, changes in normal behaviour or children may confide in us. It is our responsibility to act on or report any suspicions or concerns we may have.

- Where possible all concerns must be discussed with Samantha Boone or Victoria Campbell, however minor they may appear.
- Parents must complete the 'Pre-existing injuries' form if their child sustains an injury at home. These sheets will be regularly monitored and should a child sustain a lot of injuries, advice will be taken from the Warwickshire Safeguarding team. Any injuries found on children will be recorded; the child will be asked how they got the injury. Parents/carers will be asked about these injuries and the explanation recorded.
- The setting will complete the accident section on our 'Family' app for any injuries a child sustains while in our care and parents will be notified via the app immediately.
- All changes in normal behaviour will be recorded and will be discussed with parents/carers.
- We will act upon any concerns we have regarding the children who attend our setting using the Warwickshire County Council Safeguarding Board flow chart as our initial guide.
- All disclosures that a child make will be recorded, this includes disclosures of domestic abuse, and if necessary, action taken using the Warwickshire County Council Safeguarding Board flow chart as our initial guide.

When concerns linked to safeguarding are identified, the staff member should use their gained training and experience to ascertain next steps to be taken, and part of the process should be a discussion with the one of the settings DDSL's.

When discussing and documenting concerns, all staff **MUST** remain objective. The procedure within setting is to assess if there an immediate risk to the child, if yes, action **MUST** be taken. Informing the DSL and the child protection team/children and families front door and advice will be shared an action to be taken. At this point, the advice will also be shared as to whether parents will be informed at this point, the risk to the child will be the factor.

If it is felt that there is no immediate risk to the child, but still a risk, the process remains the same; all information is to be documented objectively, discussions to be had with the settings DDSL's, DSL and then the child protection team/children and families front door. The one differing factor is that we will have a discussion with the parents of the child before calling outside agencies.

All forms remain confidential and are kept securely within the manager's office.

To help safeguard and promote the well being of children who attend our setting please see these additional policies:

Prevent Duty

Allegations of misconduct against staff members

Whistle Blowing policy

Mobile Phone policy

Photo Policy

Recruitment policy

Policy for visitors

Anti-radicalisation policy

E-Safety

The Legal framework for this policy

- Children act (2004/1989)
- Working together to safeguard children (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Counter-Terrorism Act and Security Act (2015)
- Multi-Agency Practise Guidelines
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (amended 2015)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

Prevent Duty

In Line with section 26 of the counter-terrorism and security act (2023) we understand the importance of staff members being able to recognise and identify vulnerable children and to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

We recognise the importance of protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and promoting British values in the same way we would protect and safeguard children from any other abuse.

We will ensure all staff members are able to notice changes in children's behaviour as we would do with any kind of safeguarding matter as there is no single way of being able to identify a child who is at risk of being venerable or susceptible to radicalisation/extremism.

Regular reviews on our e-safety policy and use of mobile phones and internet policy are carried out as we recognise the increased risk of online radicalisation.

All staff members are also aware of the appropriate time to make a referral to the "Channel Programme".

County Lines

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapon-related crimes as a result of this trend.

In 2018 The Home Office Serious Crime Strategy states the NPCC definition of a County Line is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Female Genital mutilation (FGM)

As part our duty of care, we have a statutory obligation under national safeguarding protocols (e.g working together to safeguard children) to protect young girls and women from FGM as it is an illegal, extremely harmful practise and a form of abuse.

It is essential that we work closely together with other agencies if we suspect a child has suffered or is likely to suffer FGM as appropriate safeguarding efforts. This is reflected in the Multi-Agency Practise Guidelines.

If a child in our care shows signs and symptoms (see below) of FGM or we have good reason to suspect the child is at risk of FGM, we **MUST** refer the child using our existing standard safeguarding procedures to the relevant agencies as it is a form of child abuse. When a child is identified as "at risk" of FGM, this information **MUST** be brought to the child's GP attention and health visitor (as per section 47 of The Children's Act 1989)

Important Signs & Symptoms to look out for if you suspect the child is "at risk" of FGM

- Father comes from a community that is known to practice FGM.
- Mother/Family may have limited contact with people outside family.
- It is known that the mother has FGM.
- Family does not engage with professionals (health, school, other).
- Parents say that they or a relative will take the child abroad for a prolonged period of time.
- Childs spoken about a holiday to her country of origin or another where the procedure is practiced.
- Child has confided that she is to have a "special procedure" to "become a woman" or to be "more like her mum/sister/aunt" etc.

- Family/child are already known to social services.

Important Signs & Symptoms to look out for if you suspect the child has had FGM

- Child regularly attends GP appointments, has frequent Urinary Tract Infections (UTI'S).
- Increased emotional and physiological needs e.g withdrawals, depression or significant changes in behaviour.
- Child talks about pain/discomfort between legs.
- Child has difficulty walking, sitting for long periods of time- which wasn't a problem previously.

Significant or Immediate Risk

- Child confides in a member of staff/professional that FGM has taken place.
- Parent or family member discloses to a professional/ nursery child has had FGM.

Looked after children

As an Early years setting we are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable "looked after" children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.

In our setting, we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient, and listened to. Our policy and practise guidelines for looked after children are based on two important concepts, attachment, and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience.

This policy was reviewed by Claire Davis and Samantha Boone, 28th April 2023
Staff signatures..... (Hard copy only).
Next review date, April 2024