

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Written by – Mrs Leah Benford

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03.11.2023

Policy amended by Emily Corbett

25.01.2024

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Safeguarding Policy

**The purpose of this is to keep each child safe while she or he is in our care.**

 As a childcare setting, we aim to keep children safe by adopting the highest possible standards and taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm.

Safeguarding is about more than just child protection. Child Protection is specifically about protecting children and young people from suspected abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is much wider than that, It includes everything an organization can do to keep children and young people safe, including minimising the risk of harm and accidents and taking action to tackle safety concerns.

 The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to set a clear protocol of action and a framework for our responsibilities and legal duties in relation to each child’s welfare. The hope is to ensure a reliable and effective response in the event of any concern for a child’s welfare, and to support each child and each family.

 We aim to put children’s needs first at all times. We hope to encourage children to be confident and assertive. We aim to develop a trusting and respectful relationship with the children in our care, so that they know they will be listened to and believed.

This Policy complies with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

**This safeguarding Policy adheres to the following concepts from the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child:**

 • Non-discrimination - All the rights apply to all children equally regardless of their race, sex, religion, language, disability, opinion or family background. (Article 2)

• Best interests of child - When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what is best for the child. (Article 3)

 • The child’s view - Children have the right to say what they think about anything which affects them. When courts or official organisations make decisions which affect children, they must listen to what children want and feel. (Article 12)

**1. General statement of purpose**

The purpose of Dream Catchers Safeguarding Policy is to provide a secure framework for the staff in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those children who attend Dream Catchers. The policy aims to ensure that:

* All our children are safe and protected from harm.
* Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children to feel safe and adopt safe practices.
* Staff, children, Dream Catchers Management, visitors and parents/carers are aware of the expected behaviours and legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our children.

*‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enable them to fulfil their potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.’* Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Safeguarding at Dream Catchers is considered everyone’s responsibility and as such the club aims to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We recognise the contribution it can make in ensuring that all children attending the club feel that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken. We will do this by working in partnership with other agencies in accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2013*; and we will seek to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and others to develop and provide activities and opportunities that will help to equip our children with the skills they need. This will include materials and learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills and protective behaviours.

**2. Responsibilities and expectations**

2.1 Dream Catchers Childcare has the legal responsibility to ensure that:

* Dream Catchers has an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place
* the club complies with the policy
* the policy is made available to parents/carers if requested
* all staff, visiting activity providers and volunteers are properly DBS checked to make sure they are safe to work with the children who attend the club
* the Ofsted minimum adult/child ratio of 1:30 is met at all times at our after school club – however we would always have much more staff available onsite and ofsted required ratios for play school.
* Dream Catchers ensures that mobile phones are used safely by all staff and volunteers at the club.
* Any photos taken of children are immediately deleted.
* the club has procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff, visiting activity providers or volunteers
* Dream Catchers has appointed a Designated Safeguarding lead who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues at Dream Catchers Childcare.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding lead
The Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) is Leah Cardey. If Leah is not available, contact Emily Corbett as second Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The DSL has responsibility for:

* Ensuring that all safeguarding issues raised in the club are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency
* Arranging and ensuring attendance at safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers, at least every two years
* Ensuring that visiting activity providers comply with the Safeguarding Policy.
* Ensuring the acceptable, safe use and storage of all camera technology, images, and mobile phones through the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the appropriate policies and procedures.
* The DSL is required to attend or ensure that a senior member of staff who has the relevant training and access to appropriate supervision, attends where appropriate, all child protection case conferences, reviews, core groups or meetings where it concerns a child at Dream Catchers and to contribute to multi-agency discussions to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.

2.3 All adults associated with Dream Catchers

All child protection concerns need to be acted on immediately. If they are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, they must tell the Designated Safeguarding lead.
All adults, including the DSL, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agency including Social Care, MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or the Police.

Where a disclosure is made to an employee, visiting activity provider or volunteer it is the responsibility of that person to formally report the referral to the Dream Catchers Designated Safeguarding lead in the first instance.

Any records made should be kept securely on the child’s main blossom’s profile under Notes and Files only. Blossoms is password protected and only relevant staff have access to this information.

**3. Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse**

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes such things as child safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, intimate care and internet safety etc. The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging effect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child.

Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.

3.1 Indicators of abuse

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| age3image1912Physical abuse  | age3image3672This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness. This was previously known as Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy.  |
| Emotional abuse  | This is where a child’s need for love, security, recognition and praise is not met. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else such as in Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse. A parent, carer or authority figure is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having social contact with others or if inappropriate expectations are placed upon them. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include: * excessively clingy or attention seeking.
* very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism.
* withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness.
* lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please.
* eating disorders or self-harm.
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| age3image16184Sexual abuse  | age3image17448Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact both penetrative and non-penetrative, or viewing pornographic material including through the use of the internet. Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations or disclosures, genital soreness, injuries or disclosure, sexually transmitted diseases, inappropriate sexualized behaviour including words, play or drawing.  |
| age3image22176Neglect age3image23688 | age3image24160Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs which can significantly harm their health and development. Neglect can include inadequate supervision (being left alone for long periods of time), lack of stimulation, social contact or education, lack of appropriate food, shelter, appropriate clothing for conditions and medical attention and treatment when necessary. age3image27888 |

3.2 What to do if you are concerned
If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person,

It is important that you:
1- stay calm and listen carefully, reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you do not investigate or ask leading questions.
2- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else, do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret.
3- Inform the Designated Safeguarding lead immediately.
4- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which you must sign, date and record your position using the Safeguarding Report Form , A photo of this form is to be stored on the child’s files.

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding lead immediately.

**4. Safeguarding disabled children**

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect and to be protected from harm as non-disabled children. Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks and *‘created vulnerability’* as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment.

Dream Catchers will ensure that disabled children are listened to and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse. In order to do this we will ensure that our staff have access to specialist advice in the event they have concerns regarding abuse of a child.

**Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing (Information Sharing, 2008)**

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information

2. Be open and honest with families about what information can be shared and in what circumstances

3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt

4. Share information with consent, where appropriate and where possible

5. Consider safety and well-being and who may be affected by your sharing this information

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

7. Keep a record of your decision and reasons for sharing information

**5. Managing allegations**

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young people whilst at the club. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. This could include inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or other persons working with the children such as inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements their role and responsibilities, inappropriate sharing or images. They can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults. Allegations are made for a variety of reasons:

* Abuse has actually taken place.
* Something has happened to the child that reminds them of a past event – the child is unable to recognize that the situation and people are different: children can misinterpret language or actions.
* Some children recognize that allegations can be powerful and if they are angry about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out.
* Making an allegation is a way of seeking attention.

If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust, whether they are members of staff, visiting activity providers or volunteers, this should be brought to the immediate attention of the Designated Safeguarding lead. In the case of the allegation being made against the DSL this will be brought to the immediate attention of the LADO. The DSL will need to discuss with the Director and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the nature of the allegations in order for the appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made.

If Staff do not feel this is dealt with appropriately by the DSL then contact LADO.

The DSL will need to:

* Refer to the Director and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately and follow up in writing within 48 hours
* Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser.
* Contact the parents/carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO
* consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation
* Advise Ofsted of allegation within 14 days of the allegation
* Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation if this is deemed necessary.
* Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting.
* Advise the Independent Safeguarding Authority where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations being founded.

**6. Training**

All staff will have access to Dream Catchers safeguarding training at least every two years. All newly appointed staff, visiting activity providers and volunteers will also, as part of their induction, be issued with information in relation to the Dream Catchers Safeguarding Policy and any other policy related to safeguarding and promoting our children’s welfare.

 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will undertake Inter-agency Child Protection training for Group 3 (Safeguarding) at least every two years. This will support the DSL to be better able to undertake their role and support the club in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust and achieving better outcomes for the children in Dream Catchers.

The Safeguarding Policy is included on the Dream Catchers website and is available in the setting. Where parents/carers’ first language is not English, the policy can be made available in their own language, on request.

**7. Related All Stars policies and forms**

*‘Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as child health and safety, bullying and a range of other issues, for example, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, providing first aid, setting security, drugs and substance misuse, etc. There may also be other safeguarding issues that are specific to the local area or population.’*

*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfES 2007*

**8. Legislation relating to this policy**

Children Act 1989, 2004
Education Act 1996, 2002 (Section 175)
School Standards and Framework Act 1998
Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Guidance DfE 2011
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014
Every Child Matters 2003
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
*For further information regarding any child protection procedure, please consult www.swcpp.org.uk*

**Important Contacts for Safeguarding Children**

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Leah Cardey - 07753371224 or Emily Corbett – 07881095391

Portsmouth's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is Lydia Bowel- 02392 882500 - lado@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

 Multi-Agency Safeguarding (MASH)

**During office hours**(9.00am – 5.00pm) call Portsmouth Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0845 671 0271 or 023 9268 8793

**Out of office hours**(evenings, weekends and bank holidays) call the Duty Team on 0300 555 1373

NSPCC - 24 Hour helpline 0808 800 5000

Ofsted - 0300 123 4234 enquires@ofsted.gov.uk.

Please Print Your name, Sign and Date to confirm that you have read and fully understand our Safeguarding Policy.

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