CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Named Person MRS DAWN BEARDMORE

Statement of intent

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

The key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance policy for safeguarding children.

1. The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

2. The Alliance is committed to 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 are worried a child is being abused' (DoH 2004).

3. The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Aims

Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity , their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background;

- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;

- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;

- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults; and

- Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitments to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

The legal framework for this work is:

Primary Legislation

The Children Act 1989 – s 47

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Data Protection Act 1998

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)

The Children (NI) Order

The Children (Scotland) Order

Guidance

What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (2004)

The framework for the Assessment of children in Need and Their Families (2000)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised 1999)

The Common Assessment Framework 2005

Secondary Legislation

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1999)

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the Area Safeguarding Children Committee guidelines.
- We have a copy of ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- Details of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) contacts are also kept.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social services department, we act within the Area Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time.

Methods

Key Commitment 1

The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staffing and volunteering

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is **MRS DAWN BEARDMORE.**

- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is **MRS SASHA NEWMAN.**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed.

- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

- 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 lead to dismissal for reasons of 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 comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Key Commitment 2

The Alliance is committed to 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 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DoH 2004).

Method

Responding to suspicions of abuse

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

- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.

- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key worker makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Supervisor who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.

- Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Allegations against staff

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

- We follow the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

- We 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 details of any such alleged incident**.**

- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social service department to investigate.

- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.

- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff 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.

Disciplinary action

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

Key Commitment 3

The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Method

Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be 'strong, resilient and listened to' and so that they develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Disclosures

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

- Offers reassurance to the child;

- Listens to the child; and

- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- 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; and
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file.

The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication 'Child Protection Record' contains detailed procedures for this as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

Informal parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.

- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local Area Safeguarding Children Committee does not allow this.

- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentially

- 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 Safeguarding Children Committee.

Support to families

- The setting believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.

- The setting makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local social services department.

- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the social services department in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to 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 the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of .....(name of setting)

Held on (date).....

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee/Proprietor.....

Role of signatory e.g. chairperson etc.).....