

Safeguarding Children Policy (Early Years Child Protection)

- All parents and carers are asked to read this document carefully prior to a child being placed
- The purpose of this is to keep each child safe while she or he is in our care

1. Introduction

As an Early Years 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 child protection. Child Protection is specifically about protecting children and young people from suspected abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is much wider than child protection. It includes everything an organization can do to keep children and young people safe, including minimizing 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.

- **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)

Millfields Children's Centre recognises the responsibilities of all staff in the centre to safeguard children. All staff, including volunteers and students and service providers, have an active part protecting children from harm.

The aims of this policy are

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To raise awareness of staff of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible abuse.
- To provide systematic means of monitoring children known to be at risk of harm.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between members of staff and between staff and parents/carers
- To ensure that all staff who have access to children are suitable to do so and have a valid satisfactory CRB check.
- To ensure that all Early Years daycare staff receive regular child protection training as a condition of employment.

2. Procedures

In Millfields Children's Centre ...

- There is a Named Safeguarding Children's Advisor (NSCA) and a deputy.
At our setting the Named Safeguarding Children's Advisor (NSCA) is:
Head of Centre – Sherry Bush
At our setting the Deputy Named Safeguarding Children's Advisor (NSCA) is:
Daycare Co-ordinator – Marcella Chambers
Referrals will also be communicated to the NSCA at Millfields Community School
Headteacher – Jane Betsworth
- All members of staff develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse
- All members of staff know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures
- Our procedures are regularly reviewed and up-dated
- All new members of staff are given a copy of the safe guarding children policy as part of their induction
- All new parents and carers are be given a copy of this policy.

3. Definition of Abuse

There are many different types of abuse. Children can be abused by an adult's direct actions (e.g., beating a child) or because of an adult's inactions (e.g., not feeding or bathing a child), and even by an adult's indirect actions (e.g., domestic violence, addiction, etc).

Children can be abused by adults as well as by other young people or children.

The authorities will be notified if any professional suspects that a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Sometimes a single traumatic event constitutes 'significant harm' to a child; and, sometimes, a build-up of concerns or a series of incidents over time also gives rise to 'significant harm'.

The law recognises the following categories of abuse under the Children Act (1989):

Physical

- Where adults physically hurt or injure a child by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, etc
- Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison is also considered physical abuse

Sexual

- Where adults use children to meet their own sexual needs
- This might be full intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling
- Showing children pornography and using sexualised language with children is also sexual abuse

Emotional

- Where there is a persistent lack of love and affection that damages children emotionally
- Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make a child very nervous or withdrawn
- Seeing or hearing another person being harmed also constitutes emotional abuse, as in Domestic Violence and parental Substance Misuse

Neglect

- Where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs, for example for clothing or food
- Children might also be left unsupervised and alone
- Sometimes adults fail or refuse to give children their love and affection

4. Responsibilities

There are many areas of responsibility in terms of safeguarding children. The NCSA and all members of staff carry a range of responsibilities illustrated under the following headings:

Training

- We are responsible to undergo regular **training in safeguarding children and child protection** (every two years)
- As professionals, we ensure that our knowledge is up-to-date so that we can recognise indicators of abuse and respond appropriately

Child Protection

- If any professional becomes concerned that a child might be at risk of abuse, it is our **legal duty** to pass on our concerns to the appropriate professionals who can assess what action, if any, is in the best interest of the child
- We will inform you when we have done this, except in cases where this could put your child at greater risk

Allegations

- We have a legal duty to contact **Ofsted** if an allegation of abuse is made against any member of staff, or against anyone employed (whether paid or unpaid)
- We will inform the **Local Authority Designated Officer (L.A.D.O.)** when an allegation is made

Good Communication

- We aim to build a good relationship with parents and carers to ensure that we can provide a good continuity of care between the child's home and our care
- We also endeavour to work with the family to protect their children

Confidentiality

- We maintain appropriate boundaries with regard to confidential information regarding your child
- However, we cannot keep any information to ourselves if we believe that someone may be at risk of harm – and may need to inform another professional
- We keep confidential records on children for a period of at least three years

Registration Requirements

- We have made the setting safe for children, according to the requirements set out in by **Ofsted**
- We have registered with the **Independent Safeguarding Authority** (as of Autumn 2009) who maintain records as to the suitability of people who work with children

Accident/Injury Book

- If your child develops any health problem or suffers an injury during the time that she or he is in our care, we will keep a record of the event and inform you about it upon collection of your child, or immediately by phone, in the event of an emergency. We will both log, sign and date the incident
- You must tell us if your child has sustained an injury out of our care so that we can log it and both sign and date it
- In an emergency, we have a duty of care to act *in loco parentis* and will ensure that your child receives necessary emergency police, medical, social or emotional care they require

Police Check

- All members of staff (paid or unpaid), including frequent visitors, have a recent and clean enhanced **Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks** - this is required for any professionals who work with children
- As of Autumn 2009, we will be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority and all staff members will be approved by the Independent Safeguarding Authority

Photography

- Taking and displaying pictures of children playing and involved in tasks can be affirming and validating
- We will seek your written permission prior to photographing or filming children in our care and will state the precise circumstances in which they will be photographed and filmed

Intimate Care

- We will agree the nature and frequency of the intimate care that your child receives in our care prior to your child remaining in our care
- Examples of intimate care include going to the toilet, changing nappies, and bathing
- We always aim to encourage children to strive for greater independence at all stages of their development

5. What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

- The practitioner reports the incident they are concerned about to the NSCA as soon as possible
- They record the incident, recording only what they have observed
- The NCSA should gather any other or further information that could assist them
- Concerns should be discussed with the child's parents unless there is a concern that this will place the child at greater risk – as may be the case for instances of suspected sexual abuse
- Before making a decision whether to refer the incident to social services the designated child protection officer may discuss the issues with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The Incident is reported to social services, and a referral is filled in and sent to social services within 48 hours, **or** the incident is record in an incident book and the reason for no further action noted

6. The Assessment process

Social services will undertake an assessment of any child about whom there are concerns. All professionals involved with the child are expected to contribute towards the assessment

Social Services must meet the following mandatory timescales for assessment:

Response to a referral of a child 1 day
Completion of initial assessment 7 days
Completion of core assessment 35days

There is a range of possible outcome for any assessment.

Social services may decide that no further action needs to be taken if a child is not in need of services. The case may be referred to another service. For children who have been placed on the Child Protection Register, the case will be allocated to a social worker and on going services will be provided to assist the child.

These services will be regularly reviewed. Millfields staff may be asked to contribute their knowledge of the child's behavior or situation to the review process.

Child protection Conferences are central to procedures and social services will decide at an early stage whether a conference is necessary

A Child protection Conference brings together the family and professionals involved with the child and provide them with an opportunity to exchange information, analyse and weigh up the level of risk to the child, and make recommendations for action.

7. Information Sharing

The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information – it simply provides a framework to ensure that information is shared appropriately. It reinforces common sense rules of information handling, and helps us strike a balance between the many benefits of public organisations sharing information and maintaining safeguards and privacy of the individual.

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

When a child leaves your setting, you should send any Child Protection records to the new setting, addressed to their Nominated Safeguarding Children Adviser.

8. Record Keeping

Records should be kept whenever there are any concerns that might indicate possible abuse or neglect. This includes physical presentations on the child's body, change in moods or behaviour, statements or drawings from the child, and any concerns around parental behaviour or non-attendance.

Records should include specific and objective accounts, the date, year and time of the incident, the name, date of birth and address of the child(ren), action taken, who information has been shared with, and a stated opinion or interpretation of the facts.

9. Domestic Violence

Seeing, hearing or knowing of a parent being abused is traumatic for children and can have long-term damaging emotional and psychological effects. Wherever Domestic Violence is suspected in a home where a child is resident, we have a duty under Hackney's Corporate Domestic Violence Policy to refer this information to Social Care services, who have a duty to investigate.

10. Supporting Children

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated and may feel self blame

We recognise that the setting may provide the only stability in the life of a child who is being abused or is at risk from harm

We accept the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal and may be particularly aggressive or withdrawn

The centre will support children and their families by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying

- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the setting
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- Providing continuing and planned support for a child about whom there are concerns

11.Concerns That Fall Below Child Protection Thresholds

Mostly we work with children who have additional needs before they meet the acute threshold that demands a Child Protection referral.

As an Early Years setting, we can support these children by working with other relevant professionals by using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

The CAF sets out a structured way of 'working together' with different professionals and agencies to prevent complex needs escalating. It also provides a standard template for 'working together' – which also includes parents.

12.Confidentiality

Millfields Children's Centre recognises that all information regarding possible or actual abuse within a setting should be kept confidential to the NSCA, the senior member of staff at the setting and staff immediately involved with the child. The following points are important

- The NSCA for each setting will disclose any information about an abused child on a need to know basis only
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

13.Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the setting who are involved with a child who has suffered, or may be at risk of harm, may find the situation stressful or upsetting

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the NSCA and seek further support as appropriate, including up to date training every two years.

14.Allegations

All staff have a legal responsibility to report concerns about professional conduct of colleagues whose behaviour might harm a child, and to ensure that every allegation against a member of staff is given consistent and fair consideration. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006): 'We all share a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children & young people' (2.2).

All allegations against staff members should be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. Guidance recommends that most allegations should be thoroughly investigated by the local authority within a month. An allegation is information or a concern which suggests that an adult working with children and young people has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

We understand that a child may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Named Senior Manager in complete confidence. The Senior Manager will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and inform Ofsted. At the discretion of the Senior Manager, the member of staff may be suspended until the outcome of the Strategy Meeting/Investigation(s).

15.Prevention

Millfields Children's Centre recognises that all its settings play a part in the prevention of harm to children. We will foster an ethos of support in all settings by providing children with clear lines of communication that ensure they feel cared for, secure and listened to.

Millfields Children's Centre will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all children develop a good relationship with their keyworker adult
- Include in the play / curriculum opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- Maintain close partnerships with parents and home that begin with the initial home visit and initial assessment of a child when s/he joins the centre

16.Safer Recruitment

Safer Recruitment accredited training has been undertaken by the Head of Centre and recruitment and selection procedures are in place that help deter, detect, and reject people who might harm children, or are otherwise considered unsuitable to work with them.

We are committed to ensuring that all staff are vetted and subject to CRB disclosures, several followed up references from previous employers, and that all staff are approved by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (as of December 2009).

Child protection common meanings:

'Significant Harm'

This concept was introduced by the Children's Act 1989 as the threshold for intervention in family life for protection of children

'Harm'

Ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another

'Development'

Physical, Intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioral development

'Threshold for significant harm'

There is no absolute criteria on which to rely on. Significant harm can be caused by one traumatic event or a compilation of events that interrupt, change or damage the child's physical or psychological development

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Important Contacts for Safeguarding Children

Nominated Safeguarding Children advisor	- Sherry Bush
Deputy Nominated Safeguarding Children advisor	- Marcella Chambers
Named senior member of staff For allegations	- Jane Betsworth
Children's Social Services	- Access & Assessment 020 8356 5500
Local Authority Designated Officer (L.A.D.O)	- Sarah Wright 020 8356 6824
NSPCC	- 24 Hour helpline 0808 800 5000 For confidential advice and CP referrals
Ofsted	- 0300 123 4234 enquires@ofsted.gov.uk
The Learning Trust	- Vulnerable pupils team 020 8820 7473 Childminders Team 020 8820 7632
Independent Safeguarding Authority	- 0300 123 1111 www.isa-gov.org.uk
Hackney and City Local Safeguarding children Board	- London Borough of Hackney Mare Street London E8 1EA 020 8356 3000