



Safeguarding Children Policy

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

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 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 Child Protection 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)

CCOOSC 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 DBS check.
- 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

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'.

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:

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

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 ongoing services will be provided to assist the child.

These services will be regularly reviewed and staff may be asked to contribute their knowledge of the child's behaviour 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.

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

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.

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.

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.

CCOOSC 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

CCOOSC 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.

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.

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 Manager in complete confidence. The Manager will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and inform Ofsted. At the discretion of the Manager the member of staff may be suspended until the outcome of the Strategy Meeting/Investigation(s).

We are committed to ensuring that all staff are vetted and subject to DBS disclosures and followed up references from previous employers.

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 behavioural 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

Important Contacts for Safeguarding Children

Nominated Safeguarding Staff Member – Emily Edgar 07909717356

Children's Social Services - Access & Assessment 01924 326097

NSPCC - 24 Hour helpline 0808 800 5000

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