

Wigwam

26. Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff and our duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation)

Policy statement

We will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Key commitment 1

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- The designated person who co-ordinates child protection issues is:
Natalie Gafford
- The designated person has relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
- The designated person understands Hampshire safeguarding procedures, attends relevant safeguarding training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
- We ensure that parents are made aware of safeguarding policies and procedures through our website.
- We have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand our professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC.
- We are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
- We understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2015) and is able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- We understands how to escalate concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard.

- We follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour and follows it in regard to children acting aggressively towards each other.
- Children are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of all children where reasonably practical.
- Bedales have completed Enhanced Criminal Records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks for Natalie Gafford and Natalie Gafford has completed Enhanced Criminal Records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks for staff and volunteers.
- Staff/Volunteers must:
 - be aged 17 or over;
 - be considered competent and responsible;
 - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
 - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
 - be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- Information is recorded about staff and volunteer qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the criminal records disclosure reference number
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
 - details of who obtained it.
- All staff/volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- All staff volunteers are required to notify Natalie if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that the owner has control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than agreed advertising.
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO. (Information Commissioners Office)
- The owner keeps a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- The owner ensures that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff/volunteers and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with Wigwam Forest Schools health and safety policy.

Key commitment 2

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations 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' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We understand the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;
 - deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care team.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected children using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- The designated person completes regular training in Prevent Duty training.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- We are aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking.

While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.

- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to her may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns and follow the Hampshire safeguarding procedures.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the designated Safeguarding lead makes a dated record of the details of the concern
- In the event that staff/volunteers are unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
- We will refer concerns to the local authority children's social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to the owner or a member of staff/volunteer that give cause for concern (disclosure), or they observe signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:/volunteer
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
 - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records will be kept securely and confidentially.
- The designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day.
- Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, Natalie includes those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- We follow the procedures for recording and reporting set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Escalation process

- If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the Hampshire escalation process.
- We will ensure that volunteers are aware of how to escalate concerns.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should seek advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

Allegations against owner or volunteers

- Through publicising this document we ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of the owner and volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by volunteers or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting.
- We ensure that all volunteers know how to raise concerns within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response.

- We respond to any disclosure by children or volunteers that abuse by a volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate and/or offer advice
01329 225379
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member owner/staff/volunteer will be suspended 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 owner/volunteer, as well as children and families, throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a staff member/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, Natalie will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
- We ensure that all volunteers know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
- We ensure that all staff/volunteers receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Confidentiality

- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families/staff and volunteers.

- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team through the publication of this document.
- We will continue 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 child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their 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 Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

This policy was adopted by

Natalie Gafford

(name of provider)

On

June 2021

(date)

Date to be reviewed

June 2021

(date)

Signed on behalf of the provider

Natalie Gafford

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Director/Owner