

Child protection policy

Statement of intent

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

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our playgroup which encourages children to develop a positive self image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

The legal framework for this work is:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1984
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the Area Child Protection Committee guidelines.
- We have a copy of Area Child Protection Guidelines available for staff and parents to see.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the wellbeing of children.
- 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 playgroup and social services to work well together.
- Records of the local NSPCC contacts are also kept.
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the Area Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Methods

Staffing and volunteering

- Our named person (a member of staff or a committee member) who coordinates child protection issues is Mrs. Heidi Oliver
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the playgroup are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks 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 police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the playgroup 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 led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the playgroup.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the playgroup so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the playgroup 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.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the playgroup 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 playgroup.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our foundation stage curriculum, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the playgroup a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the playgroup, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Area Child Protection Committee when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
- Responding to suspicions of abuse
- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, the playgroup investigates.

- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the playgroup take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals.

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

Procedure for an allegation being made against a member of staff

in the event of an allegation against a member of staff the following procedure would apply:

- reports should be made directly to the chairperson
- the chairperson will immediately inform OFSTED and Social Services
- the member of staff involved will be suspended immediately on full pay until investigations have been completed.

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;
- 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 a separate confidential file.

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

Informing 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 Child Protection 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.

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 Area Child Protection Committee.

Support to families

- The playgroup takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The playgroup continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.

- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Child Protection Committee.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Easington Playgroup

Signed on behalf of the playgroup