

WHITLEY LODGE UNDER FIVES

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Statement of intent

Our pre-school 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:

- be committed to safeguarding the children in our pre-school, staff are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that anyone who comes into contact with the children in the setting has an important role to play
- ensure all staff are trained and are aware of signs of possible abuse or neglect and to act promptly if any concerns arise
- create an environment in our pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self image, regardless of race, gender, disability, language, religion, culture or home background
- help children to establish and sustain healthy, respectful and 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
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.
- promote childrens' welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism
- ensure that all practitioners make sure their approach is child centred and all times the best interest of the child is paramount
- ensure that all staff are aware and identify children who need early help
- ensure all staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's services
- ensure all staff should have professional curiosity with regards to safeguarding the children in our care
- ensure all staff are aware of the mental health problems which could be possible indicators of abuse - if a member of staff has a concern immediate action should be taken
- work closely with other agencies and sharing of information to protect the safety of the child
- ensure all staff are aware that children with SEND or medical/ health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and in person
- ensure all staff are aware that abuse "could happen here"

The legal framework and references for this work is:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- The Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018

- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership Guidelines
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused? 2015
- Safeguarding Children: A Joint Chief Inspectors Report 2002
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children safe in Education 2023
- Education Act 2002
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The prevent duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Channel Duty Guidance Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism.
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings 2022
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have a copy of What to do if you're worried a child is being abused? available for staff and parents to see.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) and Front Door of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the wellbeing of children. (Notification will be made as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 14 days of incident/accident occurring)
- We notify both Ofsted and Front Door of any serious accidents that happen on our premises when the children are being cared for. (Notification will be made as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 14 days of incident/accident occurring)
- 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 pre-school 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 NTSCP guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Definitions – What is child abuse?

Child abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. The DFE (Working together to Safeguard Children 2015) has defined them in the following way:

- **Physical abuse - when someone intentionally physically hurts or harms a child**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, biting or scratching, breaking bones, drowning, suffocating, Female genital mutilation (FGM) (see heading below**) or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child (FII, Fabricated or Induced Illness)

Physical abuse can also occur if a parent has beliefs in concepts such as 'witchcraft' and 'spirit possession', believing that their child is possessed by a demon or devil. Attempts to exorcise the child could involve, burning, beating, cutting, stabbing, starving or isolating the child from others.

Another form of physical abuse is 'breast ironing' and can be honour based, whereby a mother believes that she is protecting her daughter from rape or sexual harassment and tries to remove signs of the girl going through puberty. This would be done by beating/ pounding/ massaging the girl's breasts using hard or heated objects to aim to stunt the growth of the girl's breasts.

- **Sexual abuse** - when a person forces or entices a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

May involve physical contact, including penetration or non- penetrative acts (masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching), making a child undress or touch somebody else

Or involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming (including via the internet), exposing or flashing, forcing a child to take part in sexual activities in line or through a mobile device.

Child sexual exploitation: when a young person performs sexual activities for others in exchange for reward (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, affection, gifts, money, cigarettes etc.) Sexual abuse could be a one off or over a prolonged length of time and could be without the child's knowledge for example sharing their image online.

- **Emotional abuse - is the continual emotional mistreatment of a child**
Conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. Not giving them opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing or 'making fun' of them, humiliating or constantly criticising the child.
Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, being imposed on children, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning.
Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children to feel frightened in danger by threatening, shouting or calling them names. Blaming and using the child as a scapegoat, making the child perform degrading acts, exposing the child to upsetting events such as use of drugs or domestic abuse, persistently ignoring the child. Never saying anything kind to the child or showing any emotions or interactions towards the child.

Also exploitation or corruption of children is abuse such as 'County Lines' which is a highly organised criminal network or gangs and is a form of criminal exploitation whereby criminals groom and manipulate, coerce,

intimidate and often become violent to convince children into storing, transporting or selling drugs to suburban areas. It can happen locally as well as across the UK (lines refer to mobile phones that are used to control the child) These criminals also approach vulnerable parents and convince, coerce or intimidate them to store and carry drugs under their child's prams/ pushchairs with promises of gifts and new possessions. The criminals also target and recruit online by use of social media as well as in person.

Other forms of criminal exploitation can include gun and knife crime, trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation, forcing the child to work in cannabis factories, stealing, pickpocketing, violence towards others or vehicle crime. Children can be manipulated or forced into this life of crime as the criminals give them new phones and other material possessions and then threaten them and their families if they don't do what is asked of them. Men, women, groups, other children could all be the perpetrators in these incidents.

Radicalisation is also a form of abuse. This is where children and young people are exposed to different views, information or ideologies which could be radical or extreme and therefore become involved in extremist ideologies and terrorism which actively oppose the fundamental British values. If staff have any concerns a Prevent referral should be made.

Domestic abuse - can be psychological, sexual, physical, abuse by family members, economic, coercive and controlling behaviour, emotional or financial. It can also be child to parent abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children as victims in their own right.

A child can become a victim of domestic abuse, they may witness violence in the home or hear it and experience the effects of it at home or in fact in their own relationship, which can adversely affect the child and have a long lasting psychological and emotional impact. 'Operation Encompass' operates in all police forces across England and it provides children emotional and practical help by the police and schools/ nurseries working together. If the police are called to an incident of domestic violence and there are children present, they will share the information with the setting that the child attends to ensure information sharing and the correct support being put in place for the child.

Neglect - when there is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs such by:

- Not providing adequate food, clothing and shelter.
- Not protecting the child from physical and emotional harm.
- Not ensuring adequate supervision and access to appropriate medical care or treatment, including dental care
- Not ensuring that the child accesses education
- Not giving the child age appropriate stimulation

- Not nurturing the child and being unresponsive to the child's basic emotional needs

Neglect may also occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Neglect may also occur if parents are targeted by criminals, who use violence and abuse, and are forced to use their homes for criminal purposes such as drug dealing, sexual crimes and fire arms. The name for this type of abuse is 'Cuckooing'.

Homelessness - poses a risk to the child's welfare. If a family is unable to pay their bills and have household debt it could lead to homelessness. A referral should be made to the local housing authority and a referral to children's services if the child is harmed or is at risk of harm.

Peer on peer abuse - is when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their **peers** who are the same or similar age.

Peer on Peer abuse in our setting may take the form of name calling, excluding others, physical e.g. biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling. Some behaviour is at the age/stage developmentally of the children in our setting however if such behaviour is shown we deal with it immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of hurt/harm to other children. Whilst the layout of our room allows for constant supervision, if a child made an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour e.g. inappropriate role play, sexually touching, this would be dealt with according to our Safeguarding procedures. (Please refer to peer on peer abuse policy)

Honour based abuse - incidents or crimes which are committed to defend or protect the honour of the family/ community. They include breast ironing (mentioned above), FGM and forced marriage.

****Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - FGM is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed.

It is illegal to undertake FGM or assist or enable FGM under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 in the UK. There is no medical reason for this to be done. These procedures are often performed by a person with no medical training using non medical instruments, Children may not be given anaesthetic and may be forcibly restrained. All staff are aware that if a child talks about a 'special' event or 'holiday' and they talk about going away for a period of time for a 'special' event or any other concerns regarding FGM then this needs to be reported to **Carol Shields** who if necessary follows the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' procedure and settings Safeguarding policy. In the case of FGM having already taken place the police are informed.

Forced marriage - this is a crime in England and Wales. It is where a person is forced, either psychologically, physically, emotionally coerced or

forced into a marriage that they have not consented or are unable to consent to. Some perpetrators use perceived cultural beliefs to coerce the said person into marriage.

Harmful sexual behaviour - a child's sexual behaviour can range from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate violent, abusive and problematic. The child's age and developmental stage needs to be considered. Inappropriate behaviour needs to be addressed and intervention can help prevent abusive and violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying this behaviour may have experienced trauma and abuse and will need support.

Child abduction- whereby a child is removed/ retained by someone without parental/ or legal responsibility for the child. The abduction could be by a family member, parents, strangers or people known to the victim.

Community safety incidents - often happen near schools or nurseries, whereby concerns are raised ,by parents or children, about people loitering nearby or strangers engaging children in conversations.

Methods

Staffing and volunteering

- Our designated safeguarding lead who coordinates child protection issues is **Carol Shields**. Her role is to coordinate all matters relating to safeguarding/child protection issues. In the absence of Carol Shields, **Joanne Cameron** is the deputy safeguarding lead. Our safeguarding Trustee is **Alan Haddon**.

These will include:

- ❖ Dealing with reports of abuse against children
- ❖ Dealing with complaints against staff
- ❖ Making referrals to child protection agencies if appropriate
- ❖ Ensuring the named person attends refresher training every 2 years.
- ❖ Ensuring all staff receive training in safeguarding/child protection every 3 years
- ❖ Ensuring all staff receive training on the Prevent Duty and Channel and FGM
- ❖ Access training and keep up to date with child protection issues
- ❖ Ensuring that all new staff are properly inducted in safeguarding issues
- ❖ Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed annually
- ❖ Ensure records and reports are kept confidentially.
- ❖ Work together with external agencies if a child is 'a looked after child'
- ❖ If a child has a social worker or is vulnerable child and is absent, make contact with the parent/carer to find out the reason why

- It is the primary duty of all staff and volunteers involved in our pre-school to work to ensure the safeguarding of children and to protect them from significant harm, reporting any concerns they have to the named person.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the pre-school 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 pre-school or has access to the children.
- All volunteers and staff have a DBS check and sign up to the update service and the update service is checked regularly to make sure there have been no changes to the staff and Volunteers DBS disclosure.
- 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 pre-school.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school 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 pre-school or internally disciplined because of 'harmed/at risk' relating to a child, we ensure the DBS team (01325 953795) are notified so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. We also inform Ofsted and involve them in any investigation.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, radicalisation and extremism 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 pre-school.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left ajar.

Mobile Phone, Camera, Recording Devices, Smart Watch, Electronic Devices with imaging and sharing capabilities and Internet.

See separate as named above.

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 pre-school 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.
- We have a behaviour management policy which is applied consistently.

Complaints and concerns

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the pre-school, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of NTSCP when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We follow all the allegation 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. (see Procedure for when an allegation of abuse is made)
- We respond to suspicions of abuse whether in the setting or outside the setting e. g. in the child's home.
- 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 or making comments which give cause for concern. In these instances the pre-school investigates. If insufficient explanation of the changes in behaviour is found we will make the appropriate referrals.
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the pre-school 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.
- We respond to inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children e. g. inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities or inappropriate sharing of images.

Home Injuries

Parents are made aware of the need to inform a member of staff if a child arrives at pre-school with an injury they have incurred at home. Details of this injury can then be recorded in the Home Accident/Incident Record and shared with the person collecting the child (if different to the person bringing them).

Allegations

Where a child makes an allegation to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child
- don't promise confidentiality
- listens carefully to the child, allowing the child enough time to express what they want to say
- will stay calm and take the allegation seriously and be non judgemental
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action
- keep in mind that there may be barriers because of disability, vulnerability, ethnicity, sex, extent of language

The member of staff does not question the child

Recording suspicions of abuse and allegations

Staff to 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 allegation;
- An objective, clear and comprehensive record of the observation or allegation;
- 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.
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- Record of any action taken, any decisions made and the outcome
- If there is a report of sexual violence an immediate risk and needs assessment should be made, including the name of the victim, how they are going to be protected and supported, if there have been any other victims, the name of the alleged perpetrator, names of the other children in the setting to protect them from future harm, the time and location of the incident and any action to make the setting safe.

These records are signed and dated and kept securely in a separate confidential file.

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

Following an allegation or suspicion of abuse (including an allegation against a member of staff/volunteer) the member of staff involved will:

- Discuss concerns with named person, and/or other senior colleagues if named person unavailable
- If no longer has concerns no further action (although may need to act to ensure services provided)
- If it is decided that the child is not at risk of significant harm but has additional needs action should be taken following Early Help Assessment Framework procedures. .

- If there are still concerns that the child is at risk or likely to suffer significant harm the Named Person refers to Front Door, following up in writing within 48 hours. (In our setting we aim to do it within 24 hours)
- If there's an allegation against staff/volunteer the designated safeguarding lead should discuss the allegation with the **LADO** and the Safeguarding Trustee **Alan Haddon**, the allegation should be dealt with quickly, fairly, consistently and should protect and support the child who has made the allegation. Immediate suspension, without prejudice of the person against whom the allegation has been made, could be considered necessary and police called where necessary. Refer to the Allegations of abuse procedure for full procedure. Also inform Ofsted and follow up with report no later than next working day.
- Front Door acknowledge receipt of referral and decide on next course of action within one working day
- Front Door feedback to referrer on next course of action – may be no further social services involvement at this stage, although other action may be necessary, e.g. onward referral. Front Door may feel initial assessment required, will advise staff on further action particularly if there are concerns about child's immediate safety.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting. (See What To Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused – Attached and Allegations of abuse procedure.

Informing Parents

- Parental responsibility – a person with parental responsibility for a child has rights and obligations for that child. Parental responsibility is acquired by:
 - ❖ The mother at birth
 - ❖ The father if he is married to the mother, at the point of birth or subsequent marriage
 - ❖ The father, if not married, by formal written agreement with the mother or through a court order. A court can grant a father parental responsibility despite the mother's objections
 - ❖ The father if he was registered as the child's father and if the registration took place after 1st December 2003 (amended by the 2005 Adoption and Children Act)
 - ❖ Adoptive parents at adoption
 - ❖ A third party e.g. grandparents, relatives, foster carers as result of a Residence Order (prior to the Adoption and Children Act 2005)
 - ❖ A Local Authority where a Care Order is granted by the court
 - ❖ Family or friend carer with a special guardianship order and parental responsibility is shared by carer and parents.

Whilst a parent who does not have parental responsibility does not have the same rights and responsibilities as a parent with parental responsibility, there may still be occasions when he should be involved in the child protection process. Where in doubt, legal advice would be sought from the Local Authority solicitor.

- 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 NTSCP 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.
- Parents/carers should be aware that the pre-school will take any reasonable action to safeguard the welfare of children. In cases where there is reason to believe that a child may be subject to significant harm, ill treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff have no alternative but to follow the NTSCP procedures and inform the Children's Services department of their concern.

Information sharing

- See Early Help Assessment Framework File
- Sharing information is essential for early intervention. Practitioners should explain to children and parents what information will be shared and why. Their agreement should always be sought unless seeking permission would put the child or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
- Wherever possible practitioners should respect the wishes of children and families who do not consent to share information, but may share information without consent, if, looking at the facts of the case, there is a need to override consent.
- Information relevant to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children will cover:
 - ❖ Information about health and development of a child and his/her exposure to possible harm
 - ❖ Information about a parent/carer who may need help to, or may not be able to care for a child adequately and safely.
 - ❖ Information about other individuals who may pose a risk of harm to the child
- All decisions in respect of safeguarding children, including decisions to share information should be accurately recorded with the reasons for the decisions and /or sharing of information clearly recorded.

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 NTSCB.

Support to families

- The pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The pre-school 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 NTSCP.

- 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.

Other relevant policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies:

- Staffing and Employment Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders
- Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retentions and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Mobile Phone, Camera, Recording Devices, Smart Watch, Electronic Devices with imaging and sharing capabilities and Internet.

This policy was read and understood by all staff at a staff meeting
4th September 2023

To be revised September 2024

Carol Shields.....
 Joanne Cameron.....
 Helen Graham-Potts.....
 Amy Kennedy.....
 Jayne Pronk.....