

## 8. Safeguarding Children Policy

Staff working in the nursery have a duty of care towards the children attending and this duty brings with it the responsibility to ensure that all efforts are made to safeguard children from suspected and actual harm. Children attending the nursery have a right to feel safe and staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a responsibility to act on any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare and well-being.

The Legal framework for this policy

- Children act (2004/2006/1989)
- Working together to Safeguard children 2023
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance (2023)
- Female Genital Mutilation act 2003

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we provide, staff will often be the first people who sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child.

All staff will be familiar with their own responsibilities to act swiftly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have about any child or member of staff at the nursery. The nursery will follow the procedures set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework and South Gloucestershire Safeguarding children's partnership Guidance, and as such will seek advice on all steps taken subsequently. The nursery has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to ART who under the children Act 1989 have an obligation to investigate such matters.

Staff must not make comment either publicly or in private about a parent's supposed or actual behaviour, strict confidentiality will be observed at all times. Staff must raise any concerns initially with 'the Designated Lead Practitioner for Safeguarding', who will discuss these concerns with the manager/registered person on a need-to-know basis and appropriate action will be considered.

Staff responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse and all related information must be kept in a confidential folder in the office. Parents and families will

be treated with respect in a non-judgemental manner whilst investigations by the appropriate authorities are being carried out in the best interests of the child.

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children from abuse.

The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone who has not received their enhanced DBS check clearance and all our staff will receive safeguarding training. We know how important staff ratios are and ensure that we follow the legal requirements for the minimum numbers of staff present with the children at any time as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

Play Station Nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of the nursery staff.
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children i.e. bullying.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding and whistle blowing (see separate policy) procedures when they register with the nursery and kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy.

### **What is child abuse?**

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Staff in the nursery recognise that child abuse can and does happen in all types of families. The different social and cultural backgrounds of the children do not constitute barriers to child abuse and in most cases children are abused by individuals known to them, rather than strangers. Child abuse can take many formats, but all instances can be broadly categorised under one of four headings; neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. The following identifies some possible manifestations of child abuse; however, these lists are not exhaustive.

**Neglect** – is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, which may result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. For example; poor hygiene, untreated medical problems, emaciation or under nourishment. Staff may notice behavioural signs such as a child who always seems to be hungry, is constantly tired or talks of being left alone.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the parent/carer.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the children's services access centre will be notified.

**Physical abuse** – physical signs may involve unexplained bruising in unlikely areas, facial bruising, hand/finger marks, bite marks, burns, lacerations or abrasions. Staff may notice certain behavioural signs that also indicate physical abuse such as a child that shy's away from physical contact, is withdrawn or aggressive towards others or their behaviour changes suddenly.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.
- Such discussions will be recorded and a signature obtained from the parent/carer who will have access to such records.
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the children's services access centre should be informed immediately.

**Sexual Abuse** – Physical signs may include bruising consistent with being held firmly, discomfort in walking/sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, discharge or blood on or under clothes, or loss of appetite. Behavioural signs may include drawings or play showing indicators of sexual activity, sexual explicit language, knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, seductive behaviour towards others, poor self-esteem and a child who is withdrawn.

Procedure:

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the Safe guarding lead/ Nursery manager. In her absence the deputy safeguarding lead will be notified.
- The matter will be referred to the children's services access centre immediately.

**Emotional Abuse** – Physical signs of emotional abuse may include a general failure to thrive, not meeting expected developmental milestones and behaviourally a child may be attention seeking tells lies, have an inability to have fun, low self-esteem, speech disorders, and be inappropriately affectionate towards others.

Procedure:

- The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the Safeguarding Lead/Manager.
- Such discussions will be recorded, and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the children's services access centre will be notified (ART)

However, when identifying any potential instances of abuse, staff must at all times be aware that children may demonstrate individual, or combinations of the indicators detailed but may not be the subject of abuse. Individual or isolated incidents do not necessarily indicate abuse. However, staff should always remain vigilant and must not ignore warnings signs and contact Children's services access centre (ART) at any stage for support.

### **Injuries sustained while not in the care of the nursery.**

Staff will keep a record of any injuries that are sustained outside of the immediate care of the Nursery staff. This will include; bruises, cuts and grazes and burns etc.

Parents/carers will be asked to complete a home injury form, giving the cause of the injury, where it happened and who they were with, they will also be asked if any medical intervention was needed. If a mark is observed on a child after the parent/carer has left, they will be contacted to give an explanation; and will be asked to complete the form when they collect the child. This is all completed on Nursery in a box.

*(This policy differs for non-mobile babies or children. Please see policy 49 Non-mobile babies and children)*

*In the event that staff are concerned that the child is at risk, the following steps will take place.*

### **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff will make an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name.
- Child's address
- Child's age and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- EXACT words spoken by the child/injuries or marks seen
- Name of person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent/carer.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of staff must know the procedures for recording information. It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the ART, LADO and if appropriate; OFSTED. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have of concerns with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LADO, ART and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

All staff will attend Safeguarding Training or complete the E Learning training and receive basic training as part of their induction.

### **Practitioner Training**

A senior member of staff is identified within the nursery as the 'Designated Lead Practitioner for Safeguarding' (DLPS) in this case, Natalie Taylor, in her absence Katy Gill assumes this responsibility, if both are not present then Stacey Fowler will take responsibility and has the appropriate training to do so. The designated person will undertake specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field. When the setting is in operation, the designated safeguarding lead or an appropriately trained deputy should be available during opening hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. This will be via telephone if the DSGP is unable to be present in person.

The DSGP staff:

- should be trained to an advanced level of Child Protection and follow the appropriate training pathway in order to achieve this. In South Gloucestershire, the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership approved training pathway is to complete the one-day Interagency Child Protection training course followed by the one-day Advanced Inter-agency Child Protection training course (leaving a gap of at least three months between the two courses so that learning from the Inter-agency session can be embedded into practice).
- Should attend the CP Update training course every two years. If the two-year update period is allowed to lapse, then the Advanced Inter-agency training should be attended again.
- Complete the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) once they have completed the online module.
- Complete training on FGM via e-learning or the half day course

- At least one person on the recruitment panel should complete Safer Recruitment training (in this case, Natalie Taylor, and Katy Gill)

Every three years all other staff:

- 1) Should either complete the 'Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect' e-learning module;  
or
- 2) be trained by the DLPS or deputy using the SGCP approved cascade training pack. The DLPS or deputy can only deliver this training if their advanced level training is up to date i.e. Advanced Inter-agency or CP Update training having been completed within the two-year timeframe
- 3) should complete the free online Channel General Awareness Training and all safeguarding leads complete the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) once they have completed the online module.

All newly qualified entrants to the early year's workforce with full and relevant level 2 and/or level 3 qualifications must also have a paediatric first aid certificate before they can be included in the statutory staff: child ratios in early years settings.

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children.

Applicants for the post within the nursery are clearly informed that their positions are exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and challenge incorrect information.

All applicants must have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check and must be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

We abide by statutory requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children.

Volunteers, including students do not work unsupervised.

We abide by the Independent Safeguarding authority of Children Act requirements in the respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise lead to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children.

The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision.

## **Informing Parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of ART does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating Officer will inform the parents. In the event of a non-mobile baby community paediatrician (please refer to our non-mobile baby policy)

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know.

Any information is shared under the guidance of ART and the 'Working together to Safeguard children' document.

### **Support to Families**

- Play Station Nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery.
- The nursery continues to welcome a child and their family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse within the home.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child.

### **Allegations of abuse by/of member of staff**

- Staff will cooperate with the investigating authority.
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation
- All investigation/interviews will be documented and kept in a file in a locked office. Records on the alleged perpetrator will be kept until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years if that period of time is longer. This includes records of people no longer associated with the provision. The designated person who has been asked to investigate can not be the same person or persons who could be dealing with disciplinary action. This person will be a manager from a partner setting and will be prior to any disciplinary procedures.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.
- All allegations will be passed on to the setting's LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer – 01454 868508 and possibly the Children's service access centre – ART. If the investigation deems the allegation to be true, this will result in the termination of employment. OFSTED will be notified immediately of the allegation.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by the allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

- If an allegation of abuse is made about the nursery manager/registered person, the person making the complaint should contact the setting's LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) on – 01454 868508, and if necessary the Children's service access centre – ART, or the police directly. All allegations should be followed up to ensure the complaint is being investigated

## **Mobile Phones**

In regard to mobile phones within the setting; please refer to our mobile phone and camera policy.

## **Acronyms**

ART- Access and response team

LADO- local authority designated officer

SGCP- South Glos Children's Partnership

LSP- Local Safeguarding Partnership

## **Useful Numbers**

- Ofsted complaints, investigation and enforcement team – 03001231231
- A.R.T (Access and Response Team) – 01454 866000 01454 615165 (out of hours)
- LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) – 01454 868508 Tina Wilson

## **PRIMARY LEGISLATION**

The Children Act 1989 – Section 47

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Data Protection Act 2018 (revised 2020)

The Children Act 2004/ 2006 (Every Child Matters)

## **GUIDANCE**

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families (2000)

The Children Act (2004)

The Common Assessment Framework (2005)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)

The Prevent Duty guidance 2023



Female Genital Mutilation act 2003

Name	Signature	Date of Review