



## **Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults' policy**

**Designated safeguarding lead is** Claire Bransby

**Deputy designated safeguarding lead is** Siouxsie Holloway and Zoe Munford

### **Introduction**

The staff at Playhouse Pre-School believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be protected from harm. Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. All staff and volunteers working in the pre-school have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in the pre-school and they must ensure that the correct procedures are followed to protect children from harm, abuse or further abuse. We also have a legal duty under The Children Act 2004 to safeguard children and promote their welfare and to assist Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board acting on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse.

### **Aim**

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will do this by putting young people and vulnerable adult's right to be '*strong, resilient and listened to*' at the heart of all our activities.

The Early Years Alliance 'four commitments' are broad statements against which policies and procedures across the organisation will be drawn to provide a consistent and coherent strategy for safeguarding children young people and vulnerable adults in all services provided. The four key commitments are:

1. The Alliance is committed to empowering children, young people, and vulnerable adults, promoting their right to be '**strong, resilient, actively listened to, and heard**'.
2. The Alliance upholds a culture of safety in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its curriculum and service delivery.
3. The Alliance is committed to preventing harm and responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur. Working with statutory agencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for every child.
4. The Alliance is dedicated to increasing safeguarding confidence, knowledge and good practice throughout its training and learning programmes for adults, advocating support and representation for those in greatest need.

NB: A 'young person' is defined as 16–19-year-old. In an early years setting, they may be a student, worker, or parent.

A 'vulnerable adult' (see guidance to the Care Act 2014) as: '*a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may need community care services by reason of 'mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation*'. In early years, this person may be a service user, parent of a service user, or a volunteer.

**Key commitment 1 – Commitment to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery. Staffing/recruitment procedures to ensure a culture of safety**

- When the setting is open the designated safeguarding lead is always contactable

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- The designated safeguarding lead attends DSL training at least every two years.
- We adhere to the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare requirements.
- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure Barring Service 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, Disclosure Barring Service and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups 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. (see also 'Disciplinary Action' under commitment 2).
- If a child sustains an injury whilst in our care, we will record it in the accident/incident book as soon as possible. When the child is collected, we will inform whoever picks the child up about the injury and ensure that the parent/guardian also sign the incident book.
- If a child arrives with an injury sustained elsewhere, we will ask for an explanation and again record this on an existing injury form
- Our Behavioural Management Policy states that no physical sanctions will be used, and we will ensure that everyone complies with it in all rooms within the setting.
- We will avoid engaging in rough physical play with children- as this may be misconstrued and could cause accidental injury to a child.
- We will avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- We will take up references, including one from the candidate's last employer, and will always question any gaps in employment history.
- We will encourage an open-door ethos, to enable staff to talk to Senior Managers if they have concerns about the conduct of any of their colleagues

### **Visitors/access procedures to ensure a culture of safety**

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised
- We ensure that visitors and parents are always accompanied
- Staff will have regard to the whereabouts of other people in the building and of other users on the premises

### **Safe touch**

- Children are discouraged from sitting on adults' laps but may sit on one knee if it is felt appropriate. This could be due to a child being distressed, although, children should be encouraged to sit closely beside an adult for comfort first.
- Staff members do not carry children for any reason other than a serious incident.

- Staff members do not kiss children under any circumstances.

### **Electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities**

- Playhouse Pre-School respects that members of staff may bring their phones to work, for use in receiving emergency phone calls. All phones must be stored in their lockers.
- Mobile phones and other devices with a camera (such as smart watches) are only to be accessed during lunch breaks.
- The pre-school phone is to be used by staff for emergency contact reasons.
- Under no circumstances should photos be taken on mobile phones, cameras or other devices with imaging sharing capabilities by either staff or visitors.
- All visitors will be asked to hand in their phones when visiting the setting, these will be stored in the office and returned to the visitor when they leave the setting.
- When on outings, the senior member of staff will take their mobile phone in case of emergencies. The mobile phone will only be used in the presence of another staff member and to make an emergency call.
- All parents, carers or visitors are forbidden from using phones inside the pre-school grounds and they must not be used for taking photos.
- Any person using a phone to take photos will have it removed from their person until the photos are removed.
- When sharing photos for social media, the photos will be sent to the Social Media Coordinators mobile phone to upload to social media. The photos will not display the children's faces.

**Key commitment 2 - Commitment to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents 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 2006).**

### **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the member of staff makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses the concern with the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We do not take pictures of children's injuries unless we are asked to by the police or other child protection services. These photos are shared securely with the requested service. They are then deleted and not stored on any preschool device or printed copies made.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's schools and family's department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. In some cases, this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Hertfordshire 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.

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

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff/volunteer that gives cause for concern, observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in

behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect the member of staff/volunteer will:

- listen to the child, offers reassurance (without promising that everything will be all right) and give assurance that she or he will take action
- not question the child
- not promise to keep the information secret
- make 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 date and time; and
  - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.
- Child protection records will be kept until the child is 24 years old Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

### **Making a referral to the local authority social care team**

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication 'Child Protection Record' contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'.
- We keep a copy of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- Any bruises noticed on a non-mobile baby (under 6 months) will be referred to Children's Services

### **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 Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board 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.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- We work within the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

HSCB Office  
Room 152  
Postal Point CH0116  
County Hall  
Hertford  
Hertfordshire  
SG13 3DQ  
Telephone: 01992 588757  
Fax: 01992 588201  
Email: [admin.lscb@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:admin.lscb@hertscc.gov.uk)

- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues to ensure that the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child
- Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

### **Allegations against staff**

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting has abused a child. We will refer all allegations of a potential child protection issue to the Local Authority Designated Officer via Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The referral form can be found at <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/childprotection> and returned to LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01992 555420
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone 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, whether this relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere).
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- 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 manager will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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 staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.

### **Whistle Blowing**

It is our intention that staff working at Playhouse Pre-school feel confident about coming forward and reporting any issues/concerns that they may have regarding the areas documented below, whilst remaining protected from any subsequent discrimination.

- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith
- Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation, and every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the member of staff's identity confidential

What should be reported?

- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child

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- Any breach in the behaviour of manager, staff, student or volunteer
- Discrimination of any kind
- Concerns that could impact on the health and safety of the children or adults

### Methods

- A concern can be initially raised by any staff member to their Line Manager and/or The Manager.
- Discuss the nature of the concern together with the background, history of the concern and provide the relevant dates of incidents.
- There is no expectation that staff prove beyond doubt the truth of their suspicion; however, they will need to demonstrate that they are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for their concern.
- All employees will be treated fairly.

### Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

- Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so what form it should take.
- The incident will be investigated by the Line Manager and/or Manager and/or Ofsted
- If appropriate it will be referred and put through established Safeguarding children procedures and may form the subject of an independent inquiry
- Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the member of staff will receive in writing: Acknowledgment that the concern has been received
- Supply the member of staff with information on staff support mechanisms
- Inform the member of staff concerned as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.
- It may be necessary for OFSTED to interview staff to ensure that their disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from the workplace, if so wished, and a representative or a friend may accompany the involved member of staff for support.
- Staff will be kept informed, of the progress and outcome of any investigation to assure that any disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise
- Confidentiality – will be maintained and every effort will be made not to reveal a member of staff's identity if they so wish. If however, a member of staff makes an allegation frivolously maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action, that could include disciplinary action, may be taken.
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees from discrimination as a result of 'blowing the whistle' on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

LADO.Referral@hertfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01992 555420  
NSPCC whistle blowing hotline 0800 028 0285

**Key commitment 3 – Commitment to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. Commitment to empowering young children, through the early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.**

### Training

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they can recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

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- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- All staff will have an up-to date understanding of safeguarding children's issues and be able to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure appropriately.

### **Planning**

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision, whilst also allowing the free movement of children and adults. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others, except if a child needs assistance in the toilets. In this situation the toilet door will always be left open, and the member of staff can still be clearly heard and seen by others.
- Staff and volunteers do not bring their own cameras into the setting. Mobile phones brought into the setting by staff and visitors are locked away in the filing cabinet/lockers

### **Curriculum**

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

### **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 in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and always liaising with the local children's social care team.
- 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 care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, after 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.

### **Key commitment 4**

- There are procedures in place to ensure staff recognise children and families who may benefit from early help and can respond using local early help processes. Designated safeguarding leads should ensure all staff understand how to identify and respond to families who may need early help.

- Staff are supported to make the right decisions that enable timely and appropriate action to be taken.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads contribute towards local safeguarding arrangements to ensure that the views of the sector are heard at the highest level by:
  - Finding out how education and childcare are represented at a strategic level within their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) structures.
  - Sharing their knowledge of the experiences of children in their cohort with LSP local leaders

### **Looked after children**

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status. This term is never used to categorise a child and we do not refer to a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for the child.
- Every child is allocated a keyperson before they start, and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the keyperson has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated person and the keyperson liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The settling-in process for the child should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. We take care to be flexible in allowing the foster carer to stay during sessions until it is visible that the child has formed secure relationships with staff. We understand that handling separation may be a lengthy process for looked after children and will allow this process to take place gradually to avoid causing distress or anxiety to the child.
- In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support.
- Any concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the Designated Person and or the child's keyperson will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

### **Operation Encompass**

- Playhouse Preschool is part of Operation Encompass.
- Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children who experience Domestic Abuse.
- Operation Encompass is in place in every police force in England and Wales, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.
- Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.
- Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our preschool about **all** police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day. The notification informs us about the context of the incident and includes the Voice of the Child.



- Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputy/ies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or have completed the free National Online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other staff. All staff are encouraged undertake the online training.
- Zoe Munford and Claire Bransby undertook Operation Encompass Key Adult training on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023
- Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass setting, and we ensure that when a new child joins our preschool the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass.
- The Operation Encompass notification is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.
- The Key Adult/s have led training for all staff about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children.
- As a preschool, we have also discussed how we can support our children who are experiencing Domestic Abuse on a day-to-day basis and particularly following the Operation Encompass notification.
- We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk.

### **Legal references**

#### *Primary legislation*

Children Act 1989 – s 47

Protection of Children Act 1999

Care Act 2014

Children Act 2004 s11

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Data Protection Act 2018

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1998)

Equalities Act (2006)

Equalities Act (2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Data Protection Act (2018)

Freedom of Information Act (2000)

### **Legal references**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2023)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023

What to Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales on the duty of schools and other providers in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HMG 2015)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted 2023)

The framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (DoH 2000)

The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (DfE 2015)

***Further guidance***

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE 2018)

The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Lead Professional (CWDC 2009)

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – guide for practitioners (CWDC 2010)

Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (HMG. 2016)

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) (Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service and HM Prison Service 2014)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession (HMG 2010)

Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (HMG 2007)

Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DfE 2009)

Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (DfE and Home Office 2011)

Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Handling Cases of Forced Marriage: Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines (HMG 2014)

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-school Broadwater.

Adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 by Z. Munford