

Whiteley Preschool Child Protection Policy



At Whiteley Preschool we work together with the children, parents and carers, external agencies, and the wider community to ensure the safety and welfare of children. Our safeguarding policy is in line with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) procedures and incorporates some of the key commitments of the Early Years

Alliance Safeguarding Children's Policy.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Insuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This definition has been taken from the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018.

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm. Staff have the confidence to act, to challenge and to work collectively to promote and maintain a positive culture of safeguarding; whereby the voice of the child is listened to. Through embedding these core values into our staff, volunteers, and committee members, along with relevant training we are devoted to ensuring positive outcomes for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Whiteley Preschools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Gemma Hardy (Business Manager), she co-ordinates child, young person, and vulnerable adult protection issue.

Our appointed Safeguarding Officer is:

Carla Rowland (Childcare Manager)

Both Gemma and Carla are responsible for ensuring the effective practice of safeguarding at the settings. When the setting is open either Gemma or Carla will be present or contactable. They understand the local safeguarding children's partnership (LSCP) procedures and will attend the relevant LSCP training; whilst continually keeping their knowledge of safeguarding up to date.

Key commitment 1

- All staff receive training to ensure they understand our safeguarding policies and procedures including how to record and report any concerns. This includes both in-house training and training undertaken through the local authority. Where face to face training is not possible a suitable online alternative will be sourced. In-house training and updates will be communicated through weekly team talks and meetings.

- Staff are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the DSL. DSL's are responsible for escalating concerns and for supporting staff during these processes.
- All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and to remain professionally curious with the children's best interest at the forefront of these conversations.
- Staff receive regular supervisions, which include discussions of any safeguarding issues, performance and training requirements and opportunity to raise any issues or concerns. They also provide opportunities to identify and address any gaps in their knowledge. In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour.
- We will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
- A written record of all complaints and concerns, including details of how they were responded to can be seen upon request.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our Health and Safety Policy.
- The well-being of our staff, children and families is integrated into our daily practice; we recognise the link between mental health and safeguarding.

All staff know how to respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the LSCP and 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

The abuse of children can take the following forms:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect.

We ensure that all staff have an understanding of 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 a 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, or their play.
- 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.
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.

Any child who may be at risk of significant harm will immediately be referred to local authority children's social work services and the **Police on 999**. 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.

Recording and Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff that gives a cause for concern, or a member of staff observes 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 will:

- Listen to the child and offer reassurance.
- Not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification.
- Speak to the DSL or safeguarding officer immediately, if DSL is not onsite due to working from home contact via telephone.
- Make a written record of the 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 are signed and dated and kept in the safeguarding folder file.
- We follow the Hampshire LSCP guidelines making use of the neglect toolkit and threshold charts, making a referral via the Inter-Agency referral form link on the LSCP website. www.hampshirescp.org.uk/report-a-concern/
- We work within the Hampshire safeguarding partners guidelines.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We notify Ofsted within 14 days of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children, or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere).
Ofsted 0300 123 1231.

Staff who are involved in disclosures or child protection issues will be offered support by management (DSL) and be invited to attend supervisions to discuss any arising issues.

We refer concerns about children's welfare 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 partners. We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them). 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.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact to discuss early intervention concerns, to gain more information and their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or another person at risk. Additionally, if it may interfere with the course of a police investigation or may unduly delay the referral or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent then this process would be bypassed. Advice will be sought from children's social care, or in some circumstances the police, where necessary.
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns regarding their child; this conversation is recorded and kept with the initial concern form.
- 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 procedures of the Hampshire Safeguarding Partners 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 or where sexual abuse may have occurred; advice may be sought from children's social care. This conversation will be recorded.

Allegations against staff and persons in a position of trust

- We ensure that all parents know how to make a complaint about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting.
- We ensure that all staff and volunteers in the setting know how to raise a concern that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
- We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers, or any other person such behaviours include but are not exhaustive of:
 - inappropriate sexual comments.
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities
 - inappropriate sharing of images.
- We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers, who are also aware of how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response.
- We respond to any disclosure made by a child or member of staff regarding the abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting; that abuse may have taken or is taking place. We record the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to a DSL within the organisation and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the allegation/incident taking place. We follow their direction and advice:

LADO: Barbara Piddington – 01962 876364

email:child.protection@hants.gov.uk

Hampshire Children Services:

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm

Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm, phone 0300 555 1384

At all other times, contact the out-of-hours service, phone 0300 555 1373

Police – 101 (999 if an emergency)

- We will report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken.
Ofsted 0300 123 1231
- 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, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place; it is to protect the staff, as well as children and

families, throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we 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.

Visitors to the setting

- The visitor will be asked for identification.
- The visitor will be signed in, given a visitor badge, and will not be left alone at any point.

Photographic Procedures

Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents provide their consent when their child joins the setting. Staff do not use personal cameras or electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities to record images, personal mobile phones are locked away in a cupboard. Please see our mobile phone and photographic policy.

Absences

Parents are asked to provide us with at least one emergency contact outside of the family home. When a child does not arrive at setting, we are prepared to act if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. We will:

- Contact the child's parent via the telephone, if we cannot reach them, we will also send an email.
- Continue to try to contact the parent for 1 hour.
- If no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, contact with the emergency contact will be made. If necessary, professionals are contacted immediately and LSCP procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
- Record the reason for the absence and take the necessary steps if the absence is related to Covid-19.
- During the time when parents are choosing to keep their children home, or we are unable to offer all children space due to the restrictions of social distancing then a member of staff will keep in touch with families periodically, or as necessary.
- Parents are asked to inform us if they are shielding.
- All absences will be recorded.

Recruitment

Applicants are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed. This is to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. Where applications are rejected based on the information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

Volunteers and Staff must:

- be aged 17 or over.
- undertake a through interview.
- be considered competent, responsible, and suitable (qualifications seen).
- receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings. Including an introduction to safeguarding at our setting.
- be familiar with and understand all the settings policies and procedures.
- be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- All new staff are given a mentor.

Information is recorded about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

- the criminal records disclosure reference number.
- certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate.
- the date the disclosure was obtained; and
- details of who obtained it.

All staff and 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 applicants are sent our safeguarding policy as part of the recruitment process.

Contextualised safeguarding

We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerabilities that may affect or may have affected, children and young people using our provision. Factors such as: the family life and background, other childcare providers, adults and peers' relationships, online activities and activities, and clubs attended; including the wider social and community influences and environments. This approach aids to a better understanding of a child or young person's life away from our setting.

We will be alert to the threat's children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Including online use and from within peer groups and the wider community. Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures for reporting concerns. In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCP procedures on responding to radicalisation. If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children's social work service and/or police. All staff are aware that adults can also be vulnerable. All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that the organisation or the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child, and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures. **We have a whistleblowing policy in place.**

Key commitment 2

We are committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient, and listened to.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our daily routines to promote the personal, social, and emotional development of all children. So that they may grow to be strong and resilient, and so that they develop an understanding of how to keep safe and why it is important to do so.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their ethnicity, gender, 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.
- 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 partners and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018.

Support to families

We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, and volunteers. We make our responsibilities in relation to child protection clear to parents. Including how we report concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising with the local children's social care team. We will continue to welcome the child and the family throughout these times. We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by a child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family. We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed. 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 our data protection policy, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners.

Worried about yourself, a friend or a child or young person you know?

Please discuss any concerns you have with one of our safeguarding officers, alternatively, contact **Hampshire Children's Services** public phone number: 0300 555 1384.

Professionals should complete the online [Interagency Referral Form](#). For urgent Child protection enquiries, Professionals can phone 0300 555 1381.

If you are concerned, it is important that you talk to someone about this.

In an emergency, call 999.

Concerned about someone working with children?

If you have a concern about a member of staff working with children (in either a paid or voluntary capacity), contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on **01962 876364**

Services for Children

For further information on all services for children, young people and their families in Hampshire please see the Family Information and Services Hub: <https://fish.hants.gov.uk>

Hampshire Adult Services

Phone: 0300 555 1386

Isle of Wight Children's Services

Public: 0300 300 0117

Isle of Wight Adult Services

Phone: 01983 814980

Southampton Children's Services

Phone: 023 8083 3336

Email: mash@southampton.gov.uk

Southampton Adult Services

Phone: 023 8083 3003

Email: adultsocialcareconnect@southampton.gov.uk

Portsmouth Children's Services

Phone: 023 9268 8793

Email: pccraduty@portsmouthcc.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of Hours (5:00pm – 8:30am): 0300 555 1373

Portsmouth Adult Services

Phone: 02392 680810

Email: PortsmouthAdultMASH@portsmouthcc.gcsx.gov.uk

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept. **NSPCC 0808 800 5000**

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Early Years Inspection Framework (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further guidance

- 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: Advice for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2018)
- 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)
- Safeguarding Children (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2013)
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2013)
- The New Early Years Employee Handbook (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2016)

*A 'young person' is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer, or parent.

Date: 15th July 2015

Reviewed on 27th April 2020

Updated 20th January 2024

Signed:.....Chairperson