

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Introduction:

At My Little Explorers Forest School and Nursery, we acknowledge our responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the children in our care. We work in line with the local child safeguarding procedures if/when abuse is recorded (emotional, physical, sexual and neglect) which is through Hampshire County Council (). Also, if an allegation is made against staff (whistle blowing) we will follow the correct procedure (see whistle blowing section).

It is therefore our duty as practitioners to act accordingly in any instance that may be brought to our attention. All staff will be kept up to date with safeguarding training and work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child.

Legal Framework:

- Children act (2004/1989)
- Working together to safeguard children (2018 / 2020)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Counter-Terrorism Act and Security Act (2015)
- Multi-Agency Practise Guidelines
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Serious Crime Act 2015

Our Aim:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence.
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To support children who have suffered abuse in accordance with their agreed Child Protection Plan.
- To emphasize the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- Carefully follow the procedures for recruitment ensuring that all adults within our setting who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability (see staff document checklist).

- To set out a structured procedure within the setting in cases of suspected abuse.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff, and volunteers.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, such as MASH, Social services, foster families and any other adult or professional that may be working with the child and family.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision, and training.

Disclosure Procedure:

All staff will know how to respond to a child who is disclosing abuse and what to do next. It will be made clear to staff who the designated safeguarding leads are and who is in that day.

- Stay calm, try not to show the child if you are shocked by what is being said.
- Listen to what the child has to say without judgement and without asking any questions. **It is not our job to investigate.**
- **Do not promise confidentiality.**
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling, acknowledge how that may have been difficult for them.
- Do not criticize the perpetrator, it could be a family member or someone else they love.
- Write down everything the child has told you as clearly and concisely as you can.
- Pass the information on immediately to the DSL and/or manager.
- The DSL will then decide what the next step needs to be in the best interest of the child.
- Information should be stored securely, and everyone should understand the rules of confidentiality.
- Communicate effectively with parents/carers on a regular basis.

We have 4 Designated Safeguarding Leads who have the responsibility of safeguarding and child protection. They will undertake regular training for the role and ensure all other staff are kept up to date too.

The safeguarding and child protection team are:

- Samantha Victoria - Kerry Didimus
- Erin Finn - Michelle George

To ensure staff are confident in their role for safeguarding children they will have regular CPD to be kept up to date with the most recent legislation. **All** members of staff will develop their understanding of signs and indicators and their role in recording this information. They will

know who the DSL on site is that day and to report to them immediately. **All** staff will be provided with free online safeguarding training through EDUCARE and asked to complete this before starting. They will then be required to update this training on an annual basis. **All** new staff will be given our policies and procedures to read during an induction period as well as reading the most recent 'safeguarding children in education' legislation.

The Rights of Children and Parents/Carers in situations of alleged harm or abuse

Child:

- Be protected from harm or abuse
- Provided with a safe space and person(s) to speak freely or not at all if they choose
- Not to be questioned repeatedly
- Not to be medically examined repeatedly
- Kept involved in decisions made about their situation
- Keep their best interests in mind when assessing their situation

Parent/Carer:

- A right to contribute their thoughts/views/opinions/feelings
- If there is proof of significant harm, then the parents/carers have no immediate rights
- The DSL (depending on severity of situation) may ask parents for a meeting
- Provide intervention tools for at home to provide continuity of help for the child if required

Boundaries of Confidentially

- It is the responsibility for all those involved to keep information of the children, parents, carers, and members of staff confidential
- Information should not be shared unless it is essential e.g. to protect a child by sharing information with the DSL and/or appropriate agencies that will play a vital role in child protection
- No information should be kept on personal devices and the setting has a no devices policy around nappy changing (see nappy changing policy)
- Information should not be disclosed without parental permission unless it is necessary for safeguarding
- Any information shared should be recorded stating reasoning
- ALL information must be accurate

Staff

My Little Explorers follows Ofsted requirements for the disclosure and barring system. All staff must be DBS checked and anyone deemed unsuitable will not be allowed to work with the children. A checklist of staff documents is gone through as well to ensure all the necessary paperwork has been collected. Upon starting, all staff must have completed the safeguarding training on EYA central (previously EDUcare) and read the settings policies and procedures.

We also understand how important the staff ratios are to ensure that the children are always supervised by an adult.

Due to the outdoor nature of our forest settings we work on a lower ratio per age group:

- Babies - 3:1
- Toddler - 4:1
- Preschool - 8:1

Drop off and Pick Up Procedure

At Toothill we have a double gate system. Parents/carers come to the first gate and can only come through once a staff member has brought their child through the second gate and shut it behind them. This prevents other children running through and potentially ending up in the car park.

The Farley Mount setting had one gate that the parents/carers come to. They must wait until a staff member opens the gate to come in and then shut it behind them. A staff member also has to let them back out. If we are in the woods then they ring the bell and can come through. A staff member will start walking down with their child.

Drop off:

- Parents/carers arrive at the gate and ring bell
- Staff member comes to gate and lets the child in
- Ask if everything has been okay, are there any updates?
- Ensure gates are closed behind each parent/carer
- Sign child in
- Take child to the correct area (dome, cabin)
- Older children hang up bags and do their name

Pick up:

- Parents/carers come to gate and ring bell
- Staff brings the child down with their belongings
- Staff opens the gate and hands over
- Ensure gates are closed when finished
- Sign child out

Uncollected child procedure

If a child is not collected by closing time, or the end of the session and there has been no contact from the parent, or there are concerns about the child's welfare then this procedure is followed:

- The designated person is informed of the uncollected child as soon as possible and attempts to contact the parents by phone.
- If the parents cannot be contacted, the designated person uses the emergency contacts to inform a known carer of the situation and arrange collection of the child.
- After one hour, the designated person contacts the local social care out-of-hours duty officer if the parents or other known carer cannot be contacted and there are concerns about the child's welfare or the welfare of the parents.
- The designated person should arrange for the collection of the child by social care.
- Where appropriate the designated person should also notify police.

Members of staff do not:

- Go off the premises to look for the parent
- Leave the premises to take the child home or to a carer
- Offer to take the child home with them to care for them in their own home until contact with the parent is made
- Staff make a record of the incident in the child's file. A record of conversations with parents should be made, with parents being asked to sign and date the recording.
- This is logged on the child's personal file along with the actions taken. The confidential safeguarding incident report form should also be completed if there are safeguarding and welfare concerns about the child, or if Social Care have been involved due to the late collection.
- If there are recurring incidents of late collection, a meeting is arranged with the parents to agree a plan to improve time-keeping and identify any further support that may be required.

Phones and Ipads

Any personal phones of staff should be kept in the car or in the basket in the office. Only the work phones should be used within the setting. These are basic 'brick' phones with no camera device and just used for calling when staff are out in the woods or on a walk.

Work ipads are used for nursery in a box and taking photos to upload onto nursery in a box as part of the daily record. Some are uploaded to the work google drive for marketing purposes. These photos only include children that have consent to be on social media.

All devices are kept in a secure drawer in the cabin overnight and at weekends.

At Farley mount, the manager has their phone on them as a back up due to signal and the work phone switching itself off in cold weather. When we go for a walk all staff will have their phones available to only use in an emergency situation. For example, needing to split up to look for a missing child. Phones will be kept in the safety bag and only given out if an emergency occurs.

Staff will provide family with the work numbers to be contacted in an emergency.

Anti-bullying Policy

We do not tolerate bullying in any form. This is something that all our staff and children fully understand. Staff are trained in spotting the signs of a person being bullied. Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentional hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time. Bullying can have a significant effect on a person's wellbeing and mental health. The Forest School Leader will be immediately informed of any incidents of bullying, and will work with the Nursery Manager to ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged. An investigation will take place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school is to take, by the Nursery Manager.

Visitors

All visitors must be signed in and out. They will be provided with a visitor lanyard on arrival that they will return when they leave. All visitors should have prearranged the meeting by calling the office and stating the intent of their visit. Managers should be made aware of visits within the diary.

Visitors must remain with a member of staff (usually the manager) at all times. Visitors are not allowed in any of the toileting areas or an area where a child may be getting changed.

Visitors must leave their mobile devices in the car or office (if they are visiting Toothill).

Dealing with agitated parents/visitors in the setting

- If a parent or visitor appears to be angry, mentally agitated, or possibly hostile, two members of staff will lead them away from the children to an area less open but will not shut the door behind them.
- If the person is standing, staff will remain standing
- Staff will try to empathise, for example: 'I can see that you are feeling angry at this time
- Staff offer to discuss the issue of concern and show they recognise the concern
- Staff will ensure that the language they use can be easily understood
- Staff will make it clear that they want to hear issues and seek solution
- If the person makes threats and continues to be angry, members of staff make it clear they will be unable to discuss the issue until the person stops shouting or being abusive, avoiding expressions like 'calm down' or 'be reasonable'.
- If threats continue, members of staff will explain that the police will be called and emphasise the inappropriateness of such behaviour in front of the children.
- After the event, it is recorded in the child's file together with any decisions made with the parents to rectify the situation.
- Any situation involving threats to members of staff are reported to the line manager

Threats and abuse towards staff and volunteers

- The setting is responsible for protecting the health and safety of all staff and volunteers in its service
- and has a duty of care in relation to their physical and emotional well-being. We believe that violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against staff are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. When such behaviour occurs, we will take all reasonable and appropriate action in support of our staff and volunteers.
- Staff and volunteers have a right to expect that their workplace is a safe environment, a
- that prompt and appropriate action will be taken on their behalf if they are subjected to
- abuse, threats, violence or harassment by parents, service users and other adults as they carry out their duties.

- The most common example of unreasonable behaviour is abusive or intimidating and aggressive language. If this occurs, the ultimate sanction, where informal action is not considered to be appropriate or has proved to be ineffective, is the withdrawal of permission to be on the premises.
- Where a person recklessly or intentionally applies unlawful force on another or puts another in fear of an immediate attack, it is an offence in law which constitutes an assault. We would normally expect the police to be contacted immediately.