

Safe guarding children POLICY.

We are committed to providing an environment which ensures children are safe from potential abuse. We will respond to any suspicion of potential abuse in a way which respects the child's rights and reinforces the adult's responsibilities to the children.

In order to do this we will ensure that:

- The premises and equipment will be well maintained and safe.
- All adults (staff and volunteers) working at The Group are aware of the fact that such work is exempt from the provision laid down in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All applicants for work whether voluntary or paid will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide two references. All references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought. Applicants must agree to a police check being carried out. Adults without a current police check will not be allowed to be left alone with the children or take a child to the toilet/ be on hygiene duty alone.
- All appointments will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless we are confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with the children and is subject to a satisfactory police check.
- All staff/ volunteers receive appropriate training, so that they are able to recognize the symptoms of possible neglect, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.
- Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups.
- Staff members who need to take a child aside e.g. for `time out` after behaviour which needs improving will do so only after informing other staff members of their actions and will not leave the building.
- Adults who have not been police checked will not be left alone with children and will not take children unaccompanied to the toilet.
- There is a named person to whom all concerns are referred to:
- **Manager- Helen Hicks**
- The Group has clear procedures, which all staff/ volunteers are aware of, to respond to concerns of suspected abuse (**refer to attached pages for procedures of suspected and disclosure of abuse**)
- Keep an on-going record of observations of significant changes in children's behaviour or appearance, which will be written, dated and signed and kept confidential.
- Information is shared with other staff members and volunteers only on a `need to know basis`.
- Only factual notes/ observations will be recorded as they may be used in criminal proceedings
- Recognise that parents should always be involved in the monitoring of children's behaviour or development and should be the first point of contact (except in cases of suspected sexual abuse).
- Work with the local safeguarding children board to ensure that the child's best interests are met, where appropriate.
- Continue to support and work with the child's family to maintain continuity of care for the child.

Responding to suspicions of abuse:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour or appearance will be noted and investigated. Where appropriate the Manager will endeavor to discuss concerns about the child with parent/carers, in a non-judgmental manner. If the response to this discussion gives further cause for concern then the Manager should call the local safeguarding children board.
- Point of contact will be the Duty Assessment team:

Office hours (10-1pm) (2-4pm) 01273 295920

Out of office hours 0870 2385358

Ideally the parent/carer should be made aware of this, but it is the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that The Group remains a safe place for staff and children, and the

Manager may therefore decide not to inform the parent/carer of this decision. All suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential and shared on a `need to know` basis. Usually the Manager and main staff members.

Records:

- Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up.
- **The record will include:**
 - Name, address and age of the child
 - Parent/carers details
 - Relevant telephone numbers
 - Timed and dated observations (describing objectively the child's behaviour/ appearance)
 - What is said to have happened or what was seen. Who has been told about it? Any other evidence e.g. bruising, bleeding
 - Where possible the exact words spoken by the child (without comment or interpretation)
 - The name and signature of the recorder/ any witnesses. Have the parent/carers been informed?
 - The date on which records/observations are made.
- Such records will be kept in a separate locked file and will only be accessible to those who need to know
- Parent/carers may at this point be asked to discuss any concerns, and any decisions made for the child's benefit. In all cases the child will be monitored over the coming weeks. Should there be any cause for concern, contact will be made to the Duty Assessment Team and the parent/carers informed.
- The confidentiality of the child and their family will be maintained at all times.

Liaison with other agencies:

- We will, if necessary share confidential records and observations with the local safeguarding children board, and will maintain on-going contact with other relevant agencies.

If a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child's parent/ carers will be informed at the same time as the report is made.

The person responsible for monitoring and implementing the child protection policy is: **Helen Hicks**

It is also the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that staff/ volunteers sign having read and understood the policy and are able to implement the policy should the need arise.

It is also the duty of the Manager to ensure that staff/ volunteers are adequately trained, able to recognize and respond to suspicions of abuse.