



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Safeguarding children and child protection**

#### **Policy statement**

The Hullbridge Pre-school will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of the children in our care and to give them the very best start in life.

#### **What is Safeguarding?**

The term safeguarding is used broadly, according to the latest government guidance Working together to safeguard children (2018), it means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring the 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

#### **Responsibility**

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and everyone at our setting should act in a timely and coordinated manner to respond to any concerns about the welfare of a child. All our staff members and volunteers understand how to recognise the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is being abused, how to respond, know how to report safeguarding concerns, and how to escalate any concerns if necessary. This policy aids staff and volunteers to be able to do this.

All staff members and volunteers should make themselves aware of the government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#) and [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(2015\)](#) as these provide a national framework for all agencies working with children to join in partnership to safeguard children effectively.

Staff members and volunteers have a duty to refer if they suspect that a child under 18 is suffering or has suffered abuse/neglect or if they are likely to suffer abuse/neglect. No professional has the right to withhold information or to respect a child's wish for confidentiality if requested.

#### **Staff and volunteers**

Donna Thresher is our designated staff member who co-ordinates child protection in the setting. Cat Jones is our deputy safeguarding lead and will step in should the lead not be available. They have received training to provide the role of designated lead person for safeguarding children in the setting, and attends refresher training every 3 years. The designated lead is responsible for liaison with the local children service agencies and the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). The designated lead will provide support, advice and guidance to other staff members and volunteers, on an ongoing basis and on specific safeguarding issues.

All staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures on starting at the setting. Staff are required to read the settings policies and staff handbook and are required to sign to confirm they have done so. Parents are directed to our website for access to our policies but we will provide written copies if requested.

We provide adequate and appropriate training and resources for all staff and volunteers to enable them to meet the needs of the children in our setting. All permanent staff hold a Safeguarding qualification; volunteers are made aware of their responsibilities during their induction.

All staff and volunteers over the age of 16 are informed that they must be DBS checked before working in the setting. If we have to reject an application 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 and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works in our setting or has access to the children. (see Employment, Safer Recruitment and Staffing policy)

Volunteers never work unsupervised and only under supervision of permanent staff members.

We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 2004. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. If abuse was suspected, we follow the same procedure for reporting as any other child safeguarding concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young persons refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult.

We use the 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' issued March 2015. We keep a copy of this document on our notice board alongside procedures set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board.

We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern and understand it is our duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Baring service concerning this person.

### **Training**

Management at our setting seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, domestic abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Including:

- Significant changes in a childs behaviour
- Deterioration of childrens general well being
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
- Childrens comments which could give cause for concern
- Reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting ie) the childs home
- Inappropriate behaviour by members of staff ie) inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention.

There are resources displayed on the staff board in the coat peg area and in the office such as a body map to help identify potential safeguarding concerns. Staff and volunteers are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals through this policy. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting, this is also explained in the Staff Handbook.

### **Setting**

The layout of our setting allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others. Staff personal possessions are kept in the locked staff cupboard also see E safety policy.

All visitors to the setting are required to sign in, in the allocated signing in book which is made available to all visitors when entering the setting. Visitors are asked to turn off mobile phones and not to use while in the setting. (see visitor and e-safety policies)

Staff are placed at the main door entrance of each classroom to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children this also prevents children leaving our premises unnoticed.

The arrival of staff and children at preschool is marked in the daily register and the departure of a child from preschool outside of their expected time is also marked in the register.

The main green outside gate and internal gates are locked during session times, ensuring that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has access to the children and also to ensure the children are secure and safe in the setting. Visitors have to call or text the main phone number or report to the primary school reception to gain entry through the main green gate.

We take steps 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. Only preschool devices such as tablets and cameras are to be used by staff/volunteers to take these images. On starting at the setting, parents are required to sign a consent form for these images to be taken and have full access to records containing visual images of their child. (see e-safety policy)

### **EYFS/Planning**

We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our weekly themes to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, to help them develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe ie) Stranger danger. We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's culture arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background to ensure the children feel comfortable in the setting allowing them to feel secure in confiding in staff if required.

We complete a yearly audit every October using the self audit tool available through the Essex County Council website. This enables us to ensure that policies and procedures are relevant and up to date.

We have the SET procedures saved as a bookmark on the office computer. We have signed up to receive alerts when any changes are made to the SET procedures and they are checked on a regular basis.

Any changes and updates are cascaded to staff members during staff meetings.

### **Chronologies**

We keep detailed chronologies for the children in the setting, where any concerns or conversation involving parents or professionals are logged. Staff are asked to write up their concern and how it will be followed up. The DSL will make sure that the area of concern is followed up and logged. The paperwork must then be filed by the DSL or Deputy Lead.

Once the children move on to primary school, these records are signed over to the relevant primary school.

### **Prevent Duty – See seperate policy**

# **Suspicious Of Abuse**

## **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.

We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability. We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation of children such as through internet abuse and Female Genital Mutilation that may affect or may have affected children in our setting.

We are also aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or maybe victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect the young children in our care we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who they may come into contact with.

Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedure for reporting child safeguarding concerns listed below.

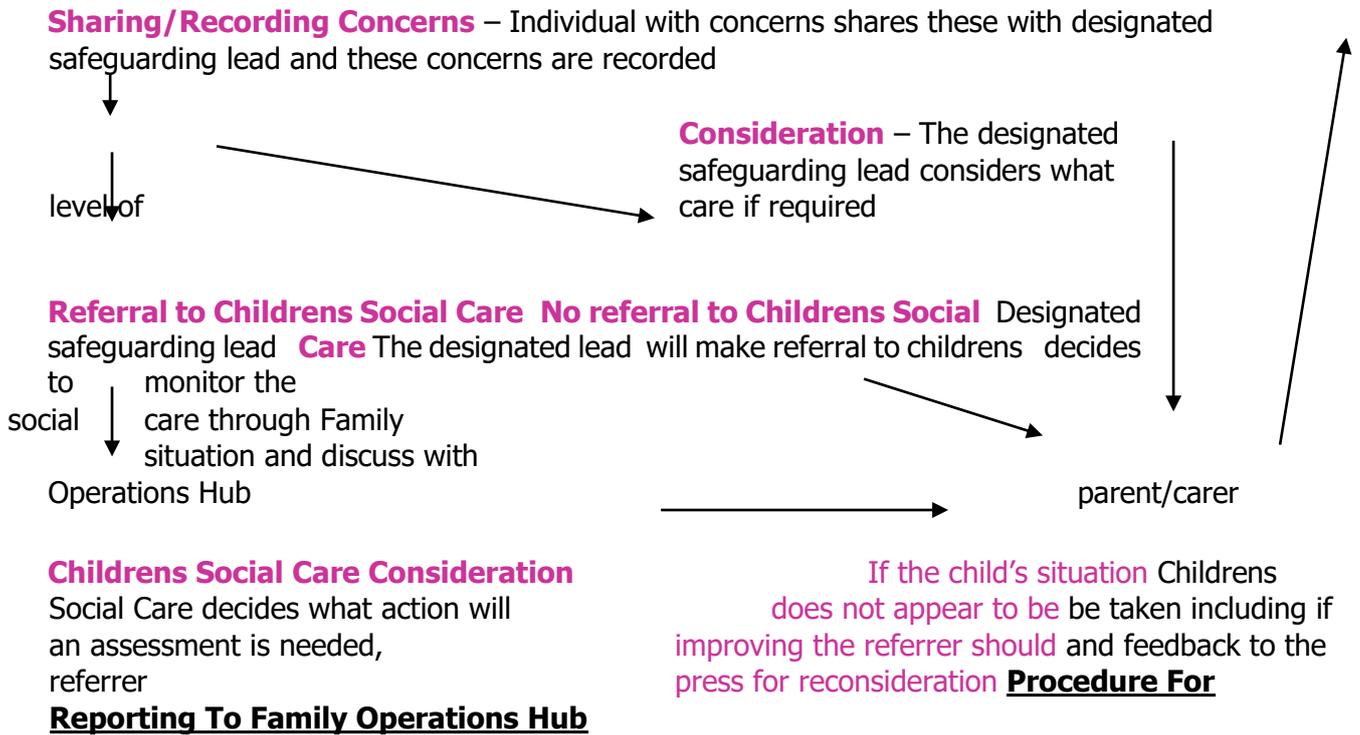
## **Discussing the Concerns**

If a disclosure is made by a child, they should never be promised confidentiality, the information will need to be shared. Staff and volunteers should take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to the child or by asking the child questions.

## **Procedure For Reporting Concerns**

- 1) Inform the safeguarding designated person of the safeguarding issue that has arisen.
- 2) The member of staff who has noticed or been made aware of the issue must make a dated and signed record of the details of the concern in the child's chronology.
- 3) The designated person will then make a decision on the action to be carried out by using the windscreen tool
- 4) If required, the designated person will refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department through The Family Operations Hub and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. In some cases, this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 5) Whatever the next action, all steps taken must be recorded in the child's chronology.

**Procedure when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm**



The family Operations Hub can be contacted for advice, family solutions and to contact childrens social care by using the Essex Effective support website. If there are concerns that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm then you should

Call Family Operation Hub on 0345 603 7627 and ask for the **priority line** or call the police.

If there is not an immediate concern for the child;

- 1) Complete an online Request support form on the Essex Effective Support website
- 2) Once submitted the form will be sent to the Children and family hub team

If no acknowledgment is received within 3 working days, the referrer must contact social services again.

Copies of the FORS form and Family Operation Hub Partner Access Map are at the end of this policy.

**Important Contact Numbers**

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| <p><b>Family Operations Hub</b><br/>                 Opening Hours: 8:45am – 17:00 (Mon–Thurs)<br/>                 8:45am – 16:30 (Fri)<br/>                 Out of hours service</p> | <p>0345 603 7627</p><br><br><br><br><p>0345 606 1212</p> |
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| <b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)<br/>Childrens\ .safeguarding@essex.gov.uk</b> | 03330 139797      |
| <b>Local police station</b> (non emergency)  | 0300 333 4444/101 |
| <b>NSPCC</b> child protection helpline – 24-hour helpline for people worried about a child | 0808 800 5000     |

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

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff or volunteer that gives cause for concern (disclosure), where a member of staff or volunteer observes signs that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising or marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff or volunteer should:

- 1)** Listen carefully to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that they will take action on what they have been told;
- 2)** Not ask the child any leading questions
- 3)** Make an accurate written record that forms an objective record of the observation/disclosure that includes:
  - the date and time of the observation/disclosure;
  - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
  - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported or who observed, with date and time; and
  - the names of any other person present at the time.

These records must be signed and dated and kept in the child's chronology.

### **Informing parents**

- Parents are normally our first point of contact if a concern arises. Concerns will be discussed with the child's parents/family and their consent will be requested if the designated lead feels a referral needs to be made unless doing this puts the child at risk of significant harm. This could be from the parents actions/reaction to the concern, or through the delay of referring especially if it could lead to the risk of loss of evidential material.
- We inform parents where we made a record of concerns in their child's chronology and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- 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 it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger. This will usually be the case where the parent or parents are the likely abuser. In these cases the social workers will inform the parents.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

We work within the Multi Agency Safeguarding arrangements and follow the SET procedures, these are bookmarked on the preschool laptop and are regularly checked for updates.

We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' March 2015 on the notice board in the office for the use of staff and volunteers.

We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child safeguarding issues (see above procedure for reporting concerns to the Family Operation Hub)

We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children in the setting or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff. Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept in the setting and in this policy.

### **Allegations against staff – also see Whistleblowing policy.**

This procedure should be followed when there is an allegation or concern that a member of staff or volunteer 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 he or she would pose a risk of harm to children.

We ensure that all parents know how to make a complaint 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 Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements ([www.escb.co.uk](http://www.escb.co.uk)) SET procedures when responding to any complaint about a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, that may have harmed or put a child at risk.

### **Procedure**

When a safeguarding allegation about a member of staff or an adult working in an early years setting is reported or known, the following procedure must be followed:

- 1) The designated lead at the setting must be informed (unless they are the subject of the allegation)
- 2) The Manager of the setting must be informed (unless they are the subject of the allegation)
- 3) The setting must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay within 24 hours of the situation arising **Telephone: 03330 139797**
- 4) Ofsted must be contacted as soon as possible but at least within 14 days on: 0300 1234666
- 5) Detailed notes of the allegation should be made (where possible in the child/ adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said, this should be signed and dated. All further communication should be documented and stored securely.

No one should speak to the member of staff or adult concerned or take any action about the allegation until the designated safeguarding lead or setting manager has spoken to the LADO as this could jeopardise any possible subsequent investigation. The individual may be asked to either leave the setting and not to return until further notice, or will be asked to remain onsite supervised until the Police arrive.

All staff members and volunteers are asked to co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

The management will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation if:

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal

This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident or behaviour has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process. If a suspended person is to return to work, the setting manager will consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person's service or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his/her services, the LADO should discuss with the employer whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The employer should make this referral but the LADO has overall responsibility to ensure the referral is made in a timely manner.

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, assist enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

### **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 Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements or ESCB.

### **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 liaising at all times 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, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of ...The Hullbridge Preschool..... (name of setting)

Held on ..... (date)

Date to be reviewed ..... date

Signed by .....

Name of Signatory ...Donna Thresher.....

Role of Signatory (ie manager) .....Manager.....