



Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

St. Mark's Pre-school

Statement of intent

At St. Mark's Pre-school we work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best possible start in life.

Aim of the policy

Our overall aim is to ensure children in our care are kept safe from harm through implementing this policy and promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by:

- Creating an environment that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background
- Encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Enabling children to have the self-confidence and the age appropriate vocabulary to keep themselves safe.
- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the Principles of safeguarding all our children.
- Being alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

This Policy will be included in our handbook and highlighted to parents when they register their children or during our home visits. North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers is always displayed on our notice board.

Liaison with other bodies/ Safeguarding documents

- We work within the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' is accessible to parents and staff. We have regard to the Government's statutory guidance '*Working together to Safeguard Children*' see www.education.gov.uk/publications . If we have concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay (This

means the North Somerset's Referral and assessment Team and, in emergencies, the police)

- We follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers.
- We notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person, living working or looking after children on our premises. This is done within 14 days of these allegations.
- If a referral is to be made to North Somerset's Referral and Assessment Team, we act within North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Staffing and volunteering

- Our designated practitioner/Owner who takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the setting is: **Karen Attwater**
- The designated practitioner is responsible for liaison with North Somerset's Referral and Assessment Team and the Police
- The designated practitioner will provide support, advice and guidance to any other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue within the setting as required.
- The designated practitioner will undertake the appropriate level of child protection training (as detailed in the North Somerset Child Protection Training Pathway) to equip them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect and take the lead in responding to safeguarding concerns.
- 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 Criminal Records Bureau 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 inform staff, volunteers, students and others of their requirement to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). A reminder of this requirement is within their annual appraisal
- If we become aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children.
- We will not employ or continue to employ a person who has a disqualification
- We do not allow people whose suitability has not been checked, including a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for.
- In the event of the disqualification of a registered provider, a person living in the same household as the registered provider, or a person employed in that household, the provider will not continue as an early years provider- nor be directly concerned in the management of such provision
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references, Criminal Record Bureau and other suitability checks for staff, volunteers, students and others (including those living or working on the premises) to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. This includes recording information about staff qualifications, checks and vetting processes and the carrying out of staff identity checks
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

- We abide by the Protection of Children 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.
- All staff will be required to read this policy and North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers during their induction and confirm they have read and understood the contents by signing the register at the back of our copy of North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers. They will be required to read and confirm understanding of the contents of the above documents annually.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting plus checking their identification and recording this.
- We take all reasonable security steps to ensure we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Procedure for checking the identity of visitors

- If the visitor or prospective parent is unknown to the setting we check their credentials and reason for visit before allowing them to enter the setting
- We ask for at least 1 form of identification to verify who they are and, if appropriate, which organisation they work for (eg official identity badge, driving licence, bankcard which shows signature)
- If we require further verification we will contact the main landline telephone number of their organisation and ask to be put through to the visitor's manager
- We ensure that the visitor or prospective parent is supervised whilst we are carrying out these checks, and throughout their visit
- We record that ID has been checked, together with the visitor's name, reason for visit, time and date in our Visitor's book/log. The Visitor or prospective parent is required to sign the book/log and their signature is then checked against their identification
- If the visitor or prospective parent is known to the setting we check that they have a valid reason to enter. They are then required to complete the visitor's book/log and will not be left unsupervised in the setting

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 child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting designated practitioner. The information is stored on the child's personal file. The practitioner will follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers
- Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer within the setting, including an allegation of abuse.

- All staff and volunteers are made aware of the role of North Somerset LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)
- We follow the guidance of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken place, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to North Somerset's Referral and Assessment Team to investigate.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social care in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay 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.
- We notify Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person, living, working or looking after children on our premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). This will be done as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the very latest within 14 days of these allegation
- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the incident

Training

- The designated practitioner will attend child protection training that equips them to carry out their role and is in line with North Somerset's Child Protection Training Pathway for staff working in childcare settings i.e. Advanced Inter-agency Child protection (2days)
- In line with North Somerset's Child Protection Training Pathway for staff working in childcare settings all staff (other than the designated practitioner) are trained to understand and implement our safeguarding policy and procedures i.e. at least to basic Awareness level.
- The training will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. This will also include inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images (Refer to Whistle- Blowing Policy and North Somerset Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers)

Early Years Foundation Stage/ Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our programme at a developmentally appropriate level for our children.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted so that they feel emotionally safe in our setting and grow to be strong, resilient, and listened to and develop an understanding of why and how to keep themselves safe.
- Children are provided with opportunities and experiences which foster a culture of mutual value and respect through having positive regard for each other's heritage arising from

their colour, gender, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child
- listens to the child
- if appropriate, gives reassurance that she or he will take action

The member of staff does not question the child

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- the child's name
- the child's address
- the age of the child
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- an objective record of the observation or 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
- the names of any other person present at the time

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file.

Making a referral to the local authority Referral and assessment Team

- We follow North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers when contacting Social Care with any concerns.
- If a referral is to be made to North Somerset's Referral and Assessment Team, we act within North Somerset's Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time

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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 North Somerset 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.

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 North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- The setting believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting makes clear to parents its 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 social services department.

- The setting continues 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 social care department in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to 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 procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The legal framework for this policy

Primary legislation

The Children Act 1989 - s 47
 The Protection of Children Act 1999
 Data Protection Act 1998
 The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
 Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised 2006)
 What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (revised 2006)
 The Framework for the Assessment of children in Need and Their Families (2000)
 The Common Assessment Framework (2005)
 North Somerset’s Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers

Secondary Legislation

Sexual Offences Act (2003)
 Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
 Human Rights Act (1999)
 Equality Act 2010
 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Signed: _____

Policy Date: _____

Review Date: _____