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**Safeguarding children and child protection**

**Policy Statement**

Meadow Brook have a responsibility for the welfare and well-being of all children in our care and we have robust procedures in place to keep them safe and protect them from maltreatment. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. We will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. This policy lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

* Children Act 1989 & 2004
* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
* Childcare Act 2006
* Data Protection Act 1998
* Prevent Duty 2015

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The setting will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

* is appropriately and regularly trained
* acts as a source of support and expertise to the setting
* has an understanding of LSCB procedures
* keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward in accordance with this policy guidance, but kept separately from the child’s general file.
* refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children’s social care or police in accordance with this guidance and local procedure
* develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
* ensures that the child protection policy is updated annually
* keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training and makes this policy available to parents.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the nursery is: Emma Howard

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at the nursery is: Lisa Davis

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children, the setting agrees to the following standards of good practice:

* to treat all children with respect
* to set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
* to ensure staff are positive role models to children and other members of the team and never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
* to involve children in decision-making which affects them (taking age and development of children into account)
* to encourage positive and safe behaviour among children
* to be a good listener
* to be alert to changes in a child’s behaviour
* to recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
* to read and understand all of the setting’s safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example, physical contact and information-sharing
* to maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoid the use of sexualised or derogatory language
* to be aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse
* to raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills they need to keep themselves safe
* to provide any form of manual or physical support required, as a last resort and to do so openly and appropriately, and to always consult the children and gain their agreement (taking age and development of children into account)
* to establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, particularly in their confidence and self-esteem and to provide opportunities for achievement
* to carry out risk assessment to ensure children are kept safe on our premises.
* to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* to record the arrival and departure times of children, staff, volunteers and visitors.
* to not allow a child to leave the setting with an adult who is not an authorised collector of the child without prior permission and a password being given.
* Ensure staff are aware of the whistle blowing policy which enables them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner.

**Use of Mobile Phones**

We believe our staff should be completely attentive during their hours of working to ensure all children in the nursery receive good quality care and education. However mobile phones do have a place in settings without a landline, and on outings, as they are often the only means of contact available and can be helpful in ensuring children are kept safe. To protect children we will only use mobile phones appropriately, we will:

* ensure staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
* provide a mobile phone for use on outings, and in settings without a landlin, and will provide a place to store this.
* prohibit staff from using their mobile phones to take pictures of the children attending the setting.
* not allow personal mobile phones to be used when working with children, they must be left in the designated phone box
* ensure that staff are alert to parents, carers and visitors using their phone in the nursery, and will ask parents and carers not to use them in the nursery.

Any breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken.

**Cameras: photography and images**

To protect children we will:

* not take photos or videos of children on any camera or electronic devices other than those belonging to the nursery.
* obtain parents’ and carers’ consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
* use only the child’s first name with an image
* ensure that children are appropriately dressed
* ensure parents and carers are not permitted to take photographs or videos of the children in the setting unless prior consent has been obtained by the manager for example for a special event, such as a Christmas play

**Safer Recruitment**

We practice robust recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers suitability to work with children. All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the setting’s Safeguarding Policy and identification of their own safeguarding training needs. They will receive initial safeguarding training during their induction period.

**Allegations against a member of staff**

We ensure that all staff and parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff, volunteers or students within the setting which may include an allegation of abuse. We follow the guidance of the local LSCB when responding to any allegations against staff. An allegation of child abuse made against a member of the family or staff may come from a parent, another member of staff or from a child’s disclosure.

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff, student, volunteer or any other person who works on the nursery premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

* The allegation should be reported to the Manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the deputy.
* The Local Authority will be informed immediately (e.g LADO) and Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures Followed
* Ofsted will be informed as soon as is practicably possible and within 14 days
* A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals to determine how this will be handled. If the member of staff whom the allegation has been made against resigns from their position the investigation will still be continued to completion.
* The nursery will follow all instructions from the LSCB, and Ofsted, and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
* Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LSCB support and advice
* The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
* All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file.
* Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
* Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children’s social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
* All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation
* The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry

**Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures**

**Recognising abuse**

We will ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to indicators of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

**Indicators of abuse and what you might see**

We are aware that it is our responsibility to report concerns, but that it is not our responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

* have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
* show signs of pain or discomfort
* look unkempt and uncared for
* change their eating habits
* have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
* appear fearful
* be reckless with regard to their own or other’s safety
* be excessively clingy or dependent
* changes in toileting habits
* self-harm
* frequently be absent or arrive late
* show signs of not wanting to go home
* display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
* become disinterested in play activities
* be constantly tired or preoccupied
* be wary of physical contact
* injuries to the mouth, genital or anal areas (e.g. bruising, swelling, sores, infection)
* display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They will be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns, you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

**Preventing Radicalisation and Tackling Extremism**

Meadow Brook Playcare has a duty to promote children’s welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism. Keeping children safe in education is our priority.

In line with the Prevent Duty (June 2015) we will ensure that all staff are trained, informed, recognises vulnerability and mitigate the risks. We will ensure the curriculum embeds British Values, teaching our staff, children and visitors to be tolerant and have respect for all faiths within out multi-cultural society.

Our Ethos values and respects diversity, encourages freedom, openness and aims to build resilience and self-confidence.

To ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Prevent Duty we will:

* Assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism.
* Have robust safeguarding policies to protect children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.
* Ensure our safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
* Ensure staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism
* Ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet
* Work in partnership with the wider community to ensure children and their families are safeguarded from radicalisation and extremism.
* Provide a safe environment in which children can discuss controversial issues, and be given the knowledge and confidence to challenge extremist beliefs and ideologies.

**Identification**

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

The risk of radicalisation is the product of a number of factors and identifying this risk requires that staff exercise their professional judgement, seeking further advice as necessary. It may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

Staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour, including even very young children, which could indicate they may be in need of help or protection.

Here are examples of indicators that may suggest vulnerability to violent extremism:

* Use of inappropriate language
* Behavioural changes;
* Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships
* Secretive behaviour
* Losing interest in friends and activities
* Showing sympathy for extremist causes
* The expression of extremist views
* attempts to access extremist websites and associated password protected chat rooms
* Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.
* Advocating violent actions and means;
* Possessing illegal or extremist literature
* Association with known extremists;

**If you have a concern about a child**

If you have a concern for the safety of a specific young person at risk of radicalisation, you should follow the safeguarding procedures outlined below, including discussing with your setting’s designated safeguarding lead.

You can also contact your local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number). They can talk to you in confidence about your concerns and help you gain access to support and advice.

**Taking Action**

If you suspect abuse key points to remember for taking action are:

* in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
* report your concern to the DSL immediately, if the DSL or their deputy is not available inform a member of senior management/committee
* do not start your own investigation
* share information on a need-to-know basis only, do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
* record your concerns, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
* seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

**Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record on our record of concern forms (supported by the nursery manager or DSL) of any observation or disclosure and include:

* Child's name, address, age and date of birth.
* Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
* Exact words spoken by the child
* Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen marked on a body map
* Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
* Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time.
* Any discussion held with parent (where deemed appropriate).
* Any action taken including steps taken to support the child.
* Details of any resulting changes to be made in the settings policies/procedures/practices.
* These records should be dated and signed by the person reporting this and the DSL and kept in the child's Record of Concern file, which is kept securely and confidentially. If the child does not have a Record of Concern file one must be created within 24 hours following the Record of Concern Procedure.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality as this promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and that the disclosure is not forced or words put into the child’s mouth. Do not examine the child or ask leading questions. Remain calm and don’t allow your own feelings (such as anger, pity or shock) to surface.

It may be thought necessary that after discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be referred to Customer First, the MASH professional refer line maybe used prior to the call. If a referral is to be made the manager / deputy manager completes the MARF form via the Suffolk Portal after the telephone call. We will keep a copy of this document and will follow the detailed guidelines.

When a referral is made, a senior manager must be notified as soon as possible

**Parental Partnership**

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 LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where there is suspected sexual abuse, the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents. Where we decide not to seek parental permission before making a referral the decision will be recorded in the child’s file with reasons, dated and signed.

We will continue to welcome the child and the family and treat them with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse. We will 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 follow the Child Protection Plan or Child in Need 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.

Parents must notify setting regarding any concerns they may have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded. We will involve parents and carers wherever possible and ensure they have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the setting for safeguarding children by setting out its statutory duty in the nursery policy and procedures, prospectus, notice board and newsletter.

**Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

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 Children Board. Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB with the provision that the care and safety of the child is paramount.

All staff understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL or manager. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a ‘need-to-know’ basis.

Child protection information, record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals as per the Confidentiality, Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy

We will develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with any enquires regarding child protection matters including attendance of case conferences, core groups and child in need meetings

**Contact Details:**

* Ofsted: 0300 123 1231
* Local Safeguarding Children’s Board: 01473 265359
* LADO: 0300 123 2044
* [Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership website](https://suffolksp.org.uk/)

The Department for Education has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable staff to raise concerns relating to extremism directly.

If you are concerned that a child’s life is in immediate danger, or that they may be imminently planning to travel abroad long term, dial 999

Signed on behalf of Meadow Brook Playcare

Name of signatory……………………………………………………………………………..

Signature……………………………………………….

Role of signatory……………………………………………………………………………….