

Little Discoveries Childcare Ltd

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child”.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016

“Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child’s life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting”.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2017

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children’s health or development & ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document ‘Working together to safeguard children’).

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other policies and procedures including Medication, Staff Behaviour, Mobile Phones and Camera’s & British Values policies as well as others available to view.

At Little Discoveries 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. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form and will always be at the main focus in our care.

To this end we will create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image, encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development, provide a safe and secure environment for all children & always listen to children and encourage them to speak out.

Our settings have a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. If anyone believes that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSLO) at the earliest opportunity.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- Children Act, 1989 & 2004
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements)

- Effective Support for children and Families in Somerset – Thresholds for assessment and services, 2017
 - What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, 2015
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016
 - Prevent Duty, 2105
- and other National and Local Government suggested documents.

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. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement 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 as well as those at risk of radicalisation in the home or community. It also outlines the steps taken by the company to ensure children's welfare is paramount.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

The company aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure that all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, grooming, discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Contact telephone numbers & contact information:

- OFSTED 0300 123 1231
- Somerset Local Safeguarding Children's Board – 01823 357868
- Somerset Direct (Children's Social Care) – 0300 123 2224
- Designated Officer (Somerset) – 01823 357823 / 0300 123 2224
- Consultation Line – 0300 123 3078
- Professional Choices – www.professionalchoices.org.uk (Early Help Assessment)
- Get Set (Somerset County Council voluntary service) 01935 848942
- SWCPP – Online access to SSCB information and advise.

The names Designated Safeguarding Lead Officers are: Mrs Cheryl Morant (Company Director) & Miss Naomi Bartin (Setting Managers). Deputy DSLO's are Miss Kally Saunders and Miss Charlotte Blackwell (Assistant Managers). Group SENCO is Miss Naomi Bartin.

Staff Recruitment

Little Discoveries Childcare Ltd has a Safer Recruitment policy which ensures that relevant safeguarding checks are carried out prior to a member of staff joining our team, these include clear DBS checks with barred information, ID checks with the right to work in the UK, medical declarations, acceptable employment and personal references, suitable qualifications to work within the appointed role and Disqualification declarations.

All Managers have completed Safer Recruitment training to enable them to safely appoint new staff members. Each new recruit has a recruitment file opened to ensure all the appropriate checks are completed. Job offers are conditional on the required checks.

The company checks relevant qualifications using the DfE Qualification Checker to ensure staff are correctly appointed to their role and a Disqualification by Association self declaration is completed by the new employee prior to starting. DBS checks are carried out through a registered company and the results recorded in the setting. Staff are encouraged to use the Update Service. Staff are required to complete an annual declaration both for the Disqualification by Association and DBS and new DBS' are completed every 5 years (if not using the update service). Volunteers are required to complete the above checks and students are required to show the setting their DBS certificate prior to starting their placements.

Company Induction

On joining Little Discoveries Childcare Ltd, all employees will be inducted and receive training on Safeguarding. As part of our induction process all staff must read the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy along with all other relevant policies. This is followed through the review process/probationary period. Students and volunteers will undergo a separate induction which covers Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Supervision

Staff have Supervision meetings six times a year to ensure that they are fully supported by the management team and that concerns can be addressed by both managers and employees. There is a specific section in the supervision relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns and enable the management team to evaluate practitioner knowledge around the subject. Supervisions, Reviews and Appraisals are recorded and a copy given to the employee and one for their file. It is the responsibility of the Manager to arrange and conduct the Supervision meetings. The Director may sit in on these to assess the Manager's ability. Supervisions enable the Managers to assess learning needs and practice development. Staff are reminded of the Whistleblowing policy during Supervision meetings.

Staff are encouraged to develop their own knowledge of the various forms of abuse, including those not listed outside of their formal Safeguarding and Child Protection training.

The Director is responsible for the supervisions/reviews and appraisals of the Managers and ensuring their Safeguarding and practice knowledge is of a high standard and that they have relevant and up to date training as DSLO's.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer stating that they have behaved in a way that is harmful to a child, committed an offence against a child or is believed to be at risk of harming a child, we will follow the HM Government guidance in 'Working together 2015'. The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the Director / DSLO instead.

The Designated Officer for Somerset (DO), OFSTED and the LSCB will then be informed by the DSLO in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The Designated Officer will be informed within 24 hours for advice and guidance and a full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (DO, OFSTED, Police, SSCB).
- OFSTED will be notified within 14 days.
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the DO, OFSTED, Somerset Direct, SSCB and asks 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 DO support and advice.

Employees under investigation will be suspended from duties with immediate effect and disciplinary procedures will be followed. Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (OFSTED) and will result in the termination of employment after a full investigation under the Gross Misconduct element. The setting is also required to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure their records are updated.

All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file. Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.

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.

Child Protection

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged and discussed with the key worker or line manager.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into the setting or occur during time at the setting, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member. The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity (not if child is believed to be at greater risk in doing so)
- Continual incidents are closely monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DSLO) for the setting and acted upon according to national & local policy
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records (where appropriate)
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the DSLO should contact the Consultation line for further support.
- Somerset Direct will need to be informed of concerns if the Threshold Document (Effective Support for Children & Families in Somerset) flow chart directs you to this.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual abuse

Action must be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer must be informed immediately.
- The matter will be referred by the DSLO to LSCB.
- Somerset Direct will be informed of concerns if the Threshold Document (Effective Support for Children & Families in Somerset) advises this.

In instances of Physical and Sexual abuse parents will not be informed of the concerns if the DSLO feels the child will be at further risk in doing so.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them. The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the DSLO who will make reference to 'Effective Support for children and Families in Somerset – Thresholds for assessment and services, 2017'

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive. Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records. An Early Help Assessment will need to be completed.

- Parents will be signposted to local services for support including GP, Health Visitors and Get Set.
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances SSCB will be notified.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation in the Early Years is seen as a persuasion to go against British Values and draw children into terrorism. PREVENT DUTY is in place to make practitioners aware of the signs of radicalisation and how to act when a concern is brought to their attention. There is no clear sign of when a young child is being radicalised but practitioners need to consider the following points:

Indicators of child abuse

- Changes in behaviours, play and attitudes towards peers and practitioners
- Expectations differing between boys and girls / men and women
- Changes to religious following or suddenly strictly adhering to religious sects
- Children at risk of other forms of abuse listed above.
- Dressing differently to usual, in line with religious expectations.

Somerset Direct will be informed of concerns if the Threshold Document (Effective Support for Children & Families in Somerset) advises this.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Staff are made aware through FGM training of the signs of this form of abuse and those most susceptible.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the DSLO) of any observation or disclosure and include:

Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen

Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses

Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.

The name, DOB and address of the child

Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager/DSLO, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth.

As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the LSCB and OFSTED, and/or a EHA needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information or concerns they have with regard to a child. The setting expects all members of staff to cooperate with the LSCB and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

All visitors & contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.

The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

Conflict

In such situation of conflict between DSLO's on the appropriate action to take in regard to Safeguarding the most senior member of the company will make the final decision on the action to be taken but may seek advice from their Local Authority or the Consultation Line.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

Support to families

The company takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the settings. The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child. 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 proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Counselling will be available for any member of the setting who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the workplace and the parents.

Early Help Assessments (EHA's)

Where the DSLO assesses the child or family requires additional support they will commence an EHA with the families consent, this is to give the relevant help and support for the child. In the case of a Level 2, 3 or Complex referral the DSLO's would meet to discuss the relevant course of action, using the Effective Support for Children and Families document to support this. EHA's are a documented story of the family, gathering information for the help need and sharing it with the relevant agencies to stop them having to repeat this each time.

Accidents and Incidents

We comply with the EYFS 2017 in relation to staff First Aid training. All qualified employees hold a full and relevant Paediatric First Aid certificate which is updated every 3 years.

In the event of a serious incident or accident at the setting OFSTED will be informed as soon as reasonably practical but within 14 days. The Local Authority will also be informed of serious incidents and accidents along with other regulatory bodies (RIDDOR).

Each setting has a first aid box available and is checked monthly by an allocated staff member. Additionally there is an outings/evacuation first aid box also held in the setting.

If a child injures themselves at the setting an accident form will be completed and parents informed the same day or as soon as reasonably practical (please see Accidents and Injuries policy for further details).

Staff Behaviour

Little Discoveries Childcare Ltd has high expectations on its staff; their knowledge, professionalism and manner, to this effect we have a Staff Behaviour policy which links closely with other policies including Social Media and Confidentiality.

SEND

When considering and addressing Safeguarding and Child Protection we understand that some groups of children and families are at greater risk than others. This includes where the child or parent has a disability or additional need and a careful assessment in such cases is made in connection with the group SENCO and where necessary the Area SENCO that supports the settings.

Staff Training

Staff hold a recognised Safeguarding and Child Protection certificate and have an annual update to support any national and local changes. Training includes the following:

- Recognising Abuse; the signs and symptoms
- Reporting Abuse
- Allegations against staff
- Safe environments
- Radicalisation
- Fabricated Illnesses
- County Lines
- Cuckooing
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Exploitation
- DASH
- FGM

DSLO's training, delivered by the LSCB, consists of the above along with Contextual Safeguarding (safeguarding beyond the home), Human Trafficking and Private Fostering.

Links to policies

The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy links with our other policies;

- Accidents and Injuries
- Positive Behaviour
- Confidentiality
- Healthy Eating
- Health and Safety
- Record Sharing/GDPR
- Medication
- Intimate care
- Supervision of Children
- Supervision of Staff
- Supervision of Visitors
- Missing Child
- Non-Attendance
- Non-Collection/Late Collection
- Safe RECRUITMENT
- Social Media
- Mobile phones and Camera's
- Staff Behaviour
- Whistleblowing

Dated: 21st March 2019