



## **Minnows' Child Protection Policy**

**Minnows' Pre-school believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm.**

We are committed to reviewing our Child Protection policy and procedures at regular intervals. This policy and its procedures will be shared with parents/carers during their child's settling in period.

### **Aim**

Minnows' Pre-school's aim is to ensure as far as is possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through the Pre-schools activities and who gains substantial access to them thereby is as safe to do so in Child Protection terms as can be guaranteed.

A member of staff is appointed as the Child Protection Officer. This Officer (currently the Head teacher) has suitable experience, training and expertise, and will be responsible for liaising with social services, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Ofsted in any child protection matter.

### **Introduction**

Our Pre-schools child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a LSCB. The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Section 3.11 of the book "Working Together to Safeguard Children, TSO 2006". States the scope of LSCB's role includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in three broad areas of activity.

These being;

First, activity that affects all children and aims to identify and prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and ensure children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.

The second area of activity is proactive work that aims to target particular groups.

The third area is responsive work to protect children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, harm including:

Children abused and neglected within families, including those harmed:

- In the context of domestic violence
- As a consequence of the impact of substance misuse

Children abused outside families by adults known to them

- Children abused and neglected by professional carers, within institutional settings, or anywhere else where children are cared for away from home
- Children abused by strangers
- Children abused by other young people
- Young perpetrators of abuse
- Children abused through prostitution.

### **Recognising Child Abuse**

Child abuse manifests itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. All staff will have child protection knowledge and will be vigilant to signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

Physical Abuse: This involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse: Varying degrees of emotional abuse is present in virtually all child protection incidents, but can also constitute abuse in its own right. Emotional abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or torture causing, or likely to cause, severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or making them feel unnecessarily frightened or vulnerable.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill health. Neglect can also manifest itself in a failure to meet the basic emotional needs of child.

### **Staff Support and Training**

We are committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection through the provision of support and training to staff. Therefore, we will ensure that:

- All staff, students and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full and up to date Criminal Record Bureau checks.
- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Child Protection policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.
- All staff and volunteers receive regular updates and supervision in child protection issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance.

- All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to child protection, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Child Protection Officer.
- We will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with it's duties to protect the safety of children and up hold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers.
- Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

### **Safe Caring**

All staff understand our child protection procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring. To this end:

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If staff are alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff should be informed.
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, students or volunteer, this will be recorded fully on the Incident Record (on CPO's laptop).
- Staff will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, staff will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, staff should not accompany children into the toilet. Staff are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.
- All allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, in the Incident Record Book. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.

### **Dealing with Allegations**

Minnows' Pre-school is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively. We will not carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. On discovering an allegation of abuse, the Child Protection Officer will immediately refer the case to the local statutory child protection agencies.

Further to this, the following principles will govern any suspected or reported case of abuse:

- Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, they will report this to the Child Protection Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.

- Staff are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and maintained. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff. The Pre-school will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.
- The Child Protection Officer will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Child Protection Officer, the Registered Person (Committee Chairperson) will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation.
- Staff will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation or a disclosure, the member of staff concerned will:

- 1 Listen fully to all the child has to say.
- 2 Make no observable judgement.
- 3 Ask open questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words but do not lead them in any way.
- 4 Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone.
- 5 Make no promises that cannot be kept; such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told.

Staff will be made aware of the Department of Health's booklet 'What to do if You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused?' (2006), and it's recent guidance on 'Protecting Children from Harm'.

### **Referring Allegations to Child Protection Agencies**

If the Child Protection Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been – or is in grave danger of being – subject to abuse, the following procedure will be activated:

- Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the local social services department.
- The Child Protection Officer will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by social services and the police.
- At all times, the safety, protection and interests of children concerned will take precedence. The committee and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.

- The Pre-school will assist the social services and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.
- OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.

(The absence of the Child Protection Officer should not prevent a referral being made. Where possible the person with first hand knowledge should be available to give their information)

The following information will be needed when making a referral:

- Name, age and address of the child allegedly abused
- Details of the child's family
- What is alleged and what has been seen including description of any injuries (site, colour, size etc) and whether there have been any discussions with the child
- Date and time of the occurrence and other witnesses
- Identity of alleged abuser

The referral should also be confirmed in writing and a copy kept for the records

This policy was adopted by Minnows' Pre-school on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

Signed .....

**Minnows' Pre-school is responsible for the safety and protection of the children we care for and is required by law to report suspected child abuse.**