



# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

At Riverside Pre-school CIO we will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults\* and to give them the very best start in life. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

## **Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

### *Key commitment 1*

The pre-school is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

### *Staff and volunteers*

- Our designated person who co-ordinates child, young person or adult protection issues is the **Lead Practitioner - Michele Stride**
- When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, suitably trained designated leads are available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns (Photos are displayed on the staff notice board designating the lead for the day)
- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is the **Chair**
- All our designated 'Safeguarding Leads' and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding
- All our designated 'Safeguarding Leads' understand LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) safeguarding procedures, attend relevant LSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually
- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually
- All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical
- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it

- All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have been replaced by the LSCB
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns
- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children
- 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 DBS – Disclosure Barring Service 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 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 at the setting or has access to the children
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises
- Volunteers must:
  - be aged 17 or over;
  - be considered competent and responsible
  - receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
  - be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
  - be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the DBS reference number;
  - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;
  - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - details of who obtained it
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us)
- From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are not required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly

- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour outlined in the-employee handbook
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- 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. Parents sign consent forms on entry and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Any images of children are held securely and in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images
- Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from ICO
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online policy in place
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy
- The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support
- The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern; however, this should not delay any referrals being made to the children’s social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, (Local Authority Designated Officer) Ofsted or RIDDOR

### ***Existing Injuries***

If a child arrives at pre-school with an existing injury, staff will complete an Existing Injuries form with full details of the injury noted on the body map.

The parent/ carer will have the opportunity to give an explanation for the injury (unless this puts the child at significant risk of harm). Both the staff member dealing with the existing injury and the parent must sign the Existing Injury form.

When staff members complete the existing injury form, they should maintain a non-judgemental attitude towards the parents/ carers. Completion of the form does not indicate that abuse has taken place.

Completed Existing Injury forms are checked by our Health & Safety officer who records the number for each child – child protection procedures may follow if quantity raises concern.

If a staff member is concerned that the existing injury may indicate abuse of the child, they should discuss this with their ‘designated person’ at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the procedures under suspected abuse.

### ***Key commitment 2***

The Pre-school is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with

The procedures that are set down in ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (HMG 2015) and “No Secrets” (DoH 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

## ***Responding to suspicions of abuse***

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through
  - significant changes in their behaviour;
  - deterioration in their general well-being;
  - their comments, which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
  - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
  - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
  - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting
- We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help and how to access services for them
- We understand we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children's social work services
- We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children's social work services
- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care department
- We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified of the unexplained absence
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness, child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession, sexual exploitation of children including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, including early years practitioners, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or maybe committed
- We also make ourselves 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 young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with
- If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer to and/or seek advice from the local authority children's social work service and/or police
- We will be alert to the threat children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and wider community

- 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 protection and child in need concerns and follow the LSCB procedures or, when they come into force replacing the LSCB, we will follow the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners
  - Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the lead practitioner who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored in the Child Protection file
  - The information is stored in a secured filing cabinet
  - In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures
  - We refer concerns about children's welfare to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation
- NB:** In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (or the local safeguarding partners when their published safeguarding arrangements take over from the LSCB)
- We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take account not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to the child or by asking questions of children; although we may clarify the details of what we think they have told us to them
  - We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse or neglect is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account in an age appropriate way, but the setting may override the young person's 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. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it
  - All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services
  - All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that the organisation or local authority have not taken the appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures
    - We have a whistleblowing procedure in place
  - Staff/volunteers know that they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding, they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

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

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
  - does not question the child; although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
  - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
    - the date and time of the observation or the 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 name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time;
    - the names of any other person present at the time;
    - a skin map, if appropriate.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in a file which is kept securely and confidentially

- The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day
- Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board or local safeguarding partners safeguarding procedures stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board

### ***Making a referral to the local authority social care team***

- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication Safeguarding Children contains procedures to help in making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as template forms for recording concerns and to assist with making a referral
- We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board, which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Early Years Alliance

### ***Escalation process***

If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the LSCB escalation process:

- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns
- We will follow local procedures published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners to resolve professional disputes

### ***Informing parents***

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We normally discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this may put the child or other person at risk or may interfere with the course of a police investigation; or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances police, where necessary
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and 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 as the report is made, except where the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners does not allow this, for example where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk (this will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred)
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking advice from children's social work services, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand and should record and follow the advice given

### ***Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working***

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners guidelines
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children's welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in an emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together
- We will notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children, or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, and any specific procedures such as responding to concerns about radicalisation or extremism (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made
- Contact details for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept in the Safeguarding Children folder

### ***Allegations against staff and persons in position of trust***

- We ensure that parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living and working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse

- We ensure that all volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff and colleagues
- We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children e.g.:
  - inappropriate sexual comments;
  - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child
- We ensure that all staff or volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the LADO, (Local Authority Designated Officer, currently Jemma Swann) on tel: 023 8091 5535, or mob: 07500 952037 or email: [LADO@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@southampton.gov.uk) to investigate and/or offer advice.
- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but it is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation. If an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk

### ***Disciplinary action***

- Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable group, can be identified and barred from working with these groups

### ***Key commitment 3***

The pre-school is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### ***Training***

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help and organisational procedures
- Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision

- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year

### ***Planning***

- *The* layout of the areas we use allow for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being seen or heard by other staff or volunteers.

### ***Curriculum***

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children

### ***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 Local Safeguarding Children Board/Local Safeguarding Partners and in line with GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018

### ***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 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
- We will engage with any child in need plan or early plan as agreed
- 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 Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

### **COVID-19**

All staff remain alert to any signs that, during the current COVID-19 outbreak, a child in their care is suffering from or likely to be suffering from harm. This includes signs of neglect that may be caused by extraordinary circumstances due to measures to curb the spread of the virus.

### **Legal framework**

#### ***Primary legislation***

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018

**Secondary legislation**

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015)

**Further Guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- What to do if you’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (DfE 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
- Hidden Harm-Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2018)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted 2016)

**Other useful Early Years Alliance publications**

- Safeguarding Children (2013)
- Safeguarding through Effective Supervision (2013)
- Employee Handbook (2016)
- People Management in the Early Years (2016)

\*A ‘young person’ is defined as 16 to 19 years old – in our setting they may be a student, worker, volunteer or parent. A ‘vulnerable adult’ is defined as a person ‘who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation’ (No Secrets DoH 2015).

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Riverside Pre-school CIO held on .....7<sup>th</sup> October 2020.....

Annual Review date ..... September 2021 ...

Signed on behalf of the pre-school .....  .....

Role of signatory.....Co-chair.....