



## 1.2 Safeguarding and child protection

### Introduction

**First Step Playgroup** fully recognises the responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Our policy applies to all staff, paid and unpaid, working in the setting, including volunteers, all of whom have a vital role in safeguarding children. Concerned parents may also contact the setting's Designated Person/s for Child Protection.

This policy sets out how the setting complies with statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who attend the setting. The policy will be reviewed regularly, annually as a minimum.

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children. The setting will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are actively listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the setting whom they can approach if they feel worried or in difficulty.

We will follow Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board (CPSCB) procedures. The setting has regard for Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015 (Department for Education).

**The Designated Persons for Child Protection in our setting are:**

**Angie Kelly and Karen Unwin**

### Our setting will:

- Ensure a DP is available at all times when the setting is open, and where possible on site at all times (to be able to access relevant records and take the necessary action).
- Ensure there are contingency arrangements should the Designated Person not be available (another Designated Person will be on site).
- Ensure that all DPs in the setting refresh their training every two years. In addition to the formal training DPs knowledge and skills will be refreshed regularly and at least annually. This may be via the DP Knowledge Hub, Child Protection Information Networks (CPINS) and the Early Years Safeguarding Conference or Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board (CPSCB) training.

- Recognise the importance of the role of the Designated Person and ensure she/he has the time and training to undertake their duties.
- Ensure that the Designated Person knows how to contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Early Help Hub and knows how to make a referral to social care.

### **The roles of staff and management**

The setting will ensure every member of staff knows:

- The names of the Designated Persons and what their role includes.
- How to record and pass on concerns about a child.
- That they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns to relevant agencies and within the timescales set out in CPSCB procedures if there is no DP present and/or they feel the child remains at risk of harm.

All staff and volunteers will receive a safeguarding briefing at induction. All staff, volunteers and students will receive regular updates on safeguarding (at least annually).

The setting will ensure that all staff attend basic child protection training every three years as a minimum and within 6 weeks of starting work at the setting. Training will contain details of the local safeguarding procedures within Cambridgeshire and enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond to these in a timely and appropriate way.

Signs and Indicators may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour.
- Deterioration in children's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks, injuries or other signs of abuse or neglect.
- Children's comments during their play or otherwise which give cause for concern.
- Pattern of absences or frequent absences.
- Any other reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting for example in the child's home.
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children.

#### **Summary: Concerns about the safety or welfare of a child – action to be taken by staff and volunteers:**

- Record the concern on a 'log of concern form'
- Pass the form **immediately** to the Designated Person for Child Protection
- The Designated Person will decide what action to take next. This may include making a referral to Social Care.
- If for any reason the Designated Person is not available and the child is at immediate risk of harm, call Social Care (via the Contact Centre) to make a referral **0345 045 5203**

## **Liaison with other agencies**

The setting will:

- Work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all children.
- Co-operate as required, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, with key agencies in their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance and providing written reports at child protection conferences and core groups.
- Notify the relevant Social Care Unit immediately if there is an unexplained absence or there is any change in circumstances to a child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Respond to requests for information about children in the setting's care from the Education Navigator at the MASH in a timely manner.

## **Record keeping**

The setting will keep clear, detailed written records of concerns about children's welfare using the Log of Concern Form. Records will be kept in individual child welfare files. Records will be stored securely and confidentially.

Parents do not have an automatic right to access child welfare records and consideration will be given as to what the consequences of information sharing might be (in line with Information Sharing Guidance, 2018). Unless it would place the child at risk of significant harm, parents will be informed that a Log of Concern Form has been completed, where it will be stored and what will happen to it when the child leaves the setting.

## **When a child leaves or moves to another setting.**

**Their individual child welfare file will be transferred to the receiving school or setting using the following protocol:**

- The file will be marked 'Confidential, Addressee Only' and sent to the Designated Person, if known, of the receiving setting/school. The file will be delivered by hand if possible; otherwise sent by delivery that can be tracked and signed for.
- The setting will contact the receiving setting/school by telephone to make them aware that there is a child welfare file and, once sent, ask them to confirm as soon as possible that they have received the file. The setting will keep a record that the file has been received in order to be able to identify its location.
- Parents will be made aware that child welfare records will be transferred, unless this would place the child at risk of acute harm.
- The setting will not keep a copy of transferred records, unless there are younger siblings who there are similar concerns about, but will keep a record of the current file location and date the file was transferred.
- If individual child welfare files cannot be transferred for any reason, the setting will archive them for 25 years from the child's date of birth\*.
- All actions and decisions will be led by what is considered to be in the best interests of the child.

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The DP will read and follow the the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' - July 2018

Fears about sharing information will not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe:

- 'information will be shared legally without consent, if the DP or a member of staff is unable to or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk.'
- 'relevant personal information will be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.'

(Information sharing, July 2018, Page 5)

## **What information will be shared?**

When taking decisions about what information to share, the DP will consider how much information they need to release and the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information should be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

Only information that is relevant to the purposes will be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make informed decisions.

Information sharing decisions must be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom. If the decision is not to share, the DP will record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the person requesting the information.

If a child discloses information that may indicate that they are at risk of abuse or neglect, the staff member will be clear that they cannot promise to keep the information a secret. The staff member will be honest to the child and explain that it will be necessary to tell someone else in order to help them and to keep them safe.

## **Communication with Parents**

The setting will:

- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency, unless the circumstances may put the child at further risk of harm. If in any doubt, staff will seek advice from Social Care as required.

- Ensure that all parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the setting and staff for safeguarding and child protection by ensuring that they receive a copy of this policy when registering their child at the setting.
- Record on the log of concern form what discussions have taken place with parents and if a decision was made not to discuss the matter with parents, the reason why not (circumstances may include if the DP is unable to or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if gaining consent could place a child at risk of harm such as potential physical or sexual abuse).

### **Supporting Children**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and trust those around them. Some children may adopt inappropriate or abusive behaviours and that these children may be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The setting will support children through:

- Activities to encourage self-esteem, self-motivation and resilience.
- An ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment that values people.
- A behaviour policy aimed at supporting all children. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the child's sense of self-worth. The setting will ensure that the child knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but she/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies which support the child and family such as Social Care and District Teams.
- A commitment to develop partnerships with parents.
- Recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic abuse/violence, mental ill-health or substance misuse may be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.
- Monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and seeking advice or making a referral to other agencies, e.g. Social Care, when necessary.

### **Children of Parents/Carers misusing Drugs and/or Alcohol**

Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with the risk of significant harm to children, particularly when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

If the setting has concerns about drug and/or alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures. This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children
- Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g. customers or dealers
- The effects of drugs and/or alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour

- Chaotic drug and/or alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance
- Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency
- Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment
- Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.

### **Children Misusing Drugs or Alcohol**

The discovery that a young person is misusing legal or illegal substances or reported evidence of their substance misuse is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the setting will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- To believe the young person's substance misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse
- To believe the young person's substance related behaviour is a result of abuse or because of pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults
- Where the misuse is suspected of being linked to parent/carer substance misuse
- Where the misuse indicates an urgent health or safeguarding concern
- Where the young person is perceived to be at risk of harm through any substance associated criminality

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic Abuse is defined as: *"any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional"*. (Home Office, 2013)

The setting recognises that where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young person will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships.

#### **Summary: Domestic Abuse**

Where there are concerns regarding Domestic Abuse, the member of staff must log the concern and pass to the Designated Person who will seek advice from the relevant agencies and follow child protection procedures.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**

We recognise that, statistically, children with additional needs, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Setting staff

who deal with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to indicators of abuse.

Children with communication difficulties are also vulnerable to abuse because they are unable to express themselves to others. Instead such children will often exhibit changes in behaviours or signs and indicators of abuse. Staff will be trained to recognise these indicators.

Where necessary, the setting will seek advice from other professionals and specialist services and provide additional training to staff in the use of Makaton, PECS or other communication systems.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse and Sexual Violence and Harassment between Peers**

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer on peer abuse. Peer on peer abuse can include:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling
- Sexual bullying
- Being coerced to send sexual images
- Sexual assault
- Teenage relationship abuse.

The setting recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. Sexual violence may include rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault. Sexual harassment refers to 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature', such as sexual comments, sexual taunting or physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone. Online sexual harassment may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos, sexualised online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages, and sexual exploitation, coercion and threats.

The setting will:

- Be clear that peer on peer abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Provide training for staff on how to manage a report of peer on peer abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- Make decisions on a case-by-case basis.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, offer appropriate support and take the wishes of the victim into account when decision making.
- Implement measures to keep the victim, alleged perpetrator and if necessary other children and staff members, safe. Record any risk assessments and keep them under review.
- Give consideration to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations
- Liaise closely with external agencies, including police and social care, when required.

**Summary: Peer on Peer Abuse**

If there is any indication that a child has suffered from peer on peer abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment between peers, the child protection procedures outlined in this policy must be followed.

**Prevention of Radicalisation**

In 2010 the Government published the Prevent Strategy. This highlighted the need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism and radicalisation.

The setting recognises that children and young people are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation and that protecting children from this risk forms part of the setting's safeguarding procedures.

Staff are required to be alert to changes in children's behavior which could indicate they need help or protection. The owner will ensure that the all staff have undertaken Prevent online training.

See also *'The Prevent Duty, Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers'*, DfE (June 2015), and *'Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales,'* HM Government, (July 2015).

**Summary: Prevention of Radicalisation**

If there are concerns that a child, young person or adult may be at risk of radicalisation, exploitation or involvement in terrorism, the member of staff should log the concern and pass it to the Designated Person. The DP will seek the appropriate advice and make a Prevent referral if required.

**Children at Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

(Child Sexual Exploitation, Definition and Guide: DFE, 2017)

Sexual exploitation can take many different forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship to serious organised crime involving gangs and groups. Potential indicators of sexual exploitation will be addressed within staff training, including raising awareness with staff that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not show any external signs of abuse and may not recognise it as abuse. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of child sexual exploitation arise.

**Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation**

Criminal exploitation of children is a form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. Drug networks or gangs exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban

areas to suburban and rural areas. Exploitation can occur even if activity appears to be consensual.

The setting will address indicators of child criminal exploitation with staff through training. Staff will follow the procedures outlined in this policy if concerns of criminal exploitation arise.

**Summary: CSE or Criminal Exploitation**

If CSE or Criminal Exploitation is suspected the member of staff must complete a Log of Concern form and pass it immediately to the Designated Person who should follow safeguarding procedures and refer to the MASH.

**Children at risk of 'Honour- Based' Violence including Female Genital Mutilation**

So called 'honour-based' violence encompasses incidents which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including breast ironing, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. The setting takes these concerns seriously and staff are made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of HBV through training. Staff are required to treat all forms of HBV as abuse and follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

FGM is a procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK. Any indication that a child is at risk of FGM, where FGM is suspected, or where the woman is over 18, will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy. Staff will report concerns to the DP, who will make appropriate and timely referrals to social care. In these cases, parents will not be informed before seeking advice and the case will still be referred to social care even if it is against the child or young person's wishes.

In accordance with the Female Genital Mutilation Act, it is a statutory duty for professionals to report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

**Summary: Honour Based Violence**

If there is a concern about a child in relation to Honour Based Violence (including FGM) the member of staff must log the concern immediately and pass it to the Designated Person who will contact children's social care and the police.

**Children who have Family Members in Prison**

The setting is committed to supporting children and young people who have a parent or close relative in prison and will work with the family to find the best ways of supporting the child.

The setting recognises that children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including: poverty, stigma, isolation, poor mental health and poor attendance.

The setting will treat information shared by the family in confidence and it will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

The setting will work with the family and the child to minimise the risk of the child not achieving their full potential.

### **Privately Fostered Children**

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16, (under 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or relative in their own home for 28 days or more.

The setting will follow the mandatory duty to inform the local authority of any 'Private Fostering' arrangements.

### **Young Carers**

The setting recognises that children who are living in a home environment which requires them to act as a young carer for a family member or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol can increase their vulnerability and that they may need additional support and protection.

The setting will: seek to identify young carers; offer additional support internally; signpost to external agencies; be particularly vigilant to the welfare of young carers and follow the procedures outlined in this policy, referring to Early Help or Social Care as required if concerns arise.

### **Online Safety**

It is important that children and young people receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and are able to recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world.

Terms such as 'e-safety', 'online', 'communication technologies' and 'digital technologies' refer to all fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their well-being.

The issues can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

### **Best practice:**

- **Whole setting approach** –staff recognise and are aware of e-safety issues and the management team make online safety a priority; online safety.
- **Policies** – online safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – risk assessment is taken seriously and used to promote online safety. There are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to protect children from harmful online material.

- **Management of Personal Data** – data is managed securely and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

### **Promoting a protective ethos**

The setting will create an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and they are listened to. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- All staff, including the Designated Persons, are trained regularly to ensure skills and knowledge are up-to-date.
- Staff know how to respond to child protection concerns.
- Contribution to an inter-agency approach to child protection by working effectively and supportively with other agencies.
- Raising children's awareness and actively promoting self-esteem building, so that children have a range of strategies and contacts to ensure their safety.
- Using personal safety programmes, such as Protective Behaviours, NSPCC PANTS campaign and the Early Years Service 'Children's Safety Matters' training and resources.
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the setting's responsibility to the welfare of the children.
- Ensuring the relevant policies are in place, i.e. the use of mobile phones and cameras, behaviour management, intimate care, whistle-blowing, social networking.
- Being vigilant to the inappropriate behaviour of staff or adults working with children and ensuring that all staff and volunteers know the allegations procedure.
- Staff acting as positive role models to children and young people.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the need to maintain appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with children and parents/carers.

### **Preventing unsuitable people from working with children and young people**

The setting has a duty to ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements for their role. The setting will follow safer recruitment practices including verifying qualifications and ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken. The setting will not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, to have unsupervised contact with children.

#### **Summary: Suitability to work with children**

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

**Angie Kelly has undertaken Safer Recruitment training:**

### **Whistleblowing**

The setting has a separate whistle-blowing policy which aims to help and protect both staff and children by:

- Preventing a problem getting worse;
- Safeguarding children and young people;
- Reducing the potential risks to others.

The earlier a concern is raised, the easier and sooner it is possible for the setting to take action.

The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff, students and volunteers.

### **Summary: Allegations of abuse against adults who work or volunteer in the setting**

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following action will be taken (as per the 'Allegations of Abuse against Adults who Work or Volunteer in a Childcare Setting' flowchart and guidance):

- The setting will ensure the immediate safety of the children.
- The setting will **not** start to investigate but will immediately contact the Early Years Safeguarding Manager: 01223 714760 (if the Early Years Safeguarding Manager is not contactable, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted direct: 01223 727967).
- The Early Years Safeguarding Manager will discuss the case with the LADO, who will decide if it could be a child protection case.
- If the LADO decides the matter is a child protection case, external/internal agencies (e.g. police) will be informed by the LADO and the setting will act upon the advice given to ensure that any investigation is not jeopardised.
- The setting will notify Ofsted of an allegation of abuse.
- It may be necessary for the employer to suspend the alleged perpetrator. Suspension is a neutral act to allow a thorough and fair investigation.
- If it is agreed that the matter is not a child protection case, the setting will investigate the matter and feedback the outcome of the investigation to the Early Years Safeguarding Manager and Ofsted.

The setting will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the setting and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant agencies, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and included in references where applicable. For further information, refer to the setting's safer recruitment policy.

### **Management safeguarding responsibilities**

The owner fully recognises their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They will:

- Ensure that this policy is annually reviewed in conjunction with the setting's Designated Person/s.

**Adoption and annual review of the policy****This policy was adopted on:**20 March 2019**Signed on behalf of the  
Management:**Angie KellyManager**This policy was  
reviewed on:**07 October 2020Angie Kelly**Useful contacts****Children's Social Care**

Contact Centre (for telephone referrals)

0345 045 5203

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)

01733 234724

**Early Help Hub**

01480 376666

**Early Years Safeguarding Manager**

01223 714760

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

01223 727967

**Ofsted**

0300 123 1231

**Education Safeguarding Team:** [ecps.general@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ecps.general@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## Safeguarding Flowchart

Safeguarding concern or concern about a child's welfare



Concern logged and passed immediately to the Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection



DP will decide what action to take, which may include a referral to Children's Social Care  
**0345 045 5203**



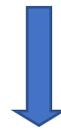
If the DP is unavailable or not contactable for any reason and you have immediate concerns about a child's welfare, contact Social Care  
**0345 045 5203**

Allegation made against member of staff



Refer to and follow the allegations flow chart (turquoise and yellow flow chart)

No safeguarding concern, but emerging needs of the child indicate that additional services or support may be required



Discuss with the setting manager or DP



Manager/SENCO or DP will complete an Early Help Assessment and contact the Early Help Hub for further advice  
**01480 376666**