

Hillside Pre-school and Early Learning Group

Policies and Procedures

Safeguarding Children Policy

The Pre-School and its entire staff have a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be taken if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect. This will include where we are concerned that a child may be witnessing domestic violence, at risk from female genital mutilation or if there is concern regarding fabricated or induced illness.

Our primary 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/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The Pre-School has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to Social Care and Health, whether this stems from allegations against staff, volunteers, carers or the general public. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on Social Care and Health to investigate such matters. In the first instance we will contact the **Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) on 01305 228558**.

The Pre-School will follow the procedures set out in the Social Care and Health Safeguarding Children Documents and as such will seek their advice on all steps taken subsequently. Within the EYFS 2021 Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (3.7) it states that Providers must have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'. **If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay.**

In the first instance our concerns will be notified to FSAL unless Social Care and Health are already involved with the family, in which case we would contact them directly. In an emergency, we may need to contact the police.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs Elaine Ford (DSL)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Mrs Melanie Pitcher (DDSL)

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1. Physical Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child including deliberate poisoning, where there is a definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Procedure

- ⌚ Any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come into Pre-School will be recorded by the staff. If there are concerns the Manager will be informed and the incident will be discussed with the parent/main carer.
- ⌚ Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records. (Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm).
- ⌚ If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, including marks or injuries to babies and non-mobile children, **The Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL)** and the police may also be notified.

2. Sexual Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play and drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Procedure

The observed instances will be reported by the Manager.

- ⌚ the matter will be referred to the FSAL and the police may also be notified.

3. Emotional Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have 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.

Procedure

- ⌚ The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the Manager. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records. (Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm).
- ⌚ If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the FSAL and the police may also be notified.

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4. Neglect

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (e.g. by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Procedure

- ⌚ The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the Manager.
- ⌚ Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records. (Discussion will take place unless it is believed that this would place the child at risk of significant harm).
- ⌚ If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) and the police may also be notified.

Staff will respond correctly by reporting any concerns to the DSL/DDSL if they see anything inappropriate for example (but not limited to):-

- Significant changes in children's behaviour or deterioration in children's well being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children.

This will include where we are concerned that a child may be witnessing domestic violence, at risk from female genital mutilation or if there is concern regarding fabricated or induced illness.

Whistle blowing

The Manager/DSL (or Deputy DSL) will take the lead in dealing with any concerns raised initially, and will then decide whether to take advice from outside agencies such as the FSAL. If it is decided to discuss such issues with the parents/carers of the child, this staff member will facilitate the discussions (although no discussions will take place if it is believed this would place the child at risk of significant harm).

The Pre-School will notify OFSTED if FSAL are investigating a safeguarding children matter related to the group. An allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, e.g. ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.

The FSAL takes the lead role in enquiring about safeguarding children issues related to the child whilst the employer retains the responsibility for disciplinary actions related to their staff member, volunteer or carer.

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All suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any record kept will be in a separate file accessed by the Manager/DSL or Deputy Manager/DDSL

Allegations made against member of staff or volunteer.

Immediate action will be taken under this heading if allegations of child abuse/neglect are made against a member of staff or volunteer working at the Group.

Procedure

- ⌚ The concern will be discussed with the parent/main carer by the Manager/DSL and the committee safeguarding representative, or the Deputy Manager/Deputy DSL should the concern involve the Manager.
- ⌚ Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
- ⌚ The Manager or Committee will contact the Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) for guidance and follow their advice.
- ⌚ The Manager or Committee will suspend the member of staff/volunteer pending investigations.

Issues and Concerns

If there appear to be any issues or concerns regarding the circumstances the FSAL and/or the police will be notified. The matter will also be reported to OFSTED and the Local Authority Designated Officer on 01305 221122 within 14 days. In the event of member of staff having their employment terminated (if the allegations are proven) a referral would be made to the Disclosure and Barring service – in accordance with EYFS 2021, section 3.13 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Disqualifications

In accordance with the Childcare Act 2006 (section 75 and 76), in the event of a disqualification of the settings registered person or a person employed in the setting the procedures set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) 3.14, 3.15, and 3.16 should be followed. The person disqualified would have their employment terminated, and would cease any involvement in the management of the pre-school. We will take immediate action to ensure the safety of all children. Ofsted will be notified immediately (or within the 14 days specified by section 3.18) of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person working with, or in contact with, the children who attend the setting

Electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities (including cameras, mobile phones, tablets and smart watches)

The setting has two tablets which are used to record children's achievements. Photographs are posted regularly on the pre-school's social media pages – subject to parental GDPR consent.

Some photographs may also be on display in the classrooms Photographs will not have the child's

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name ascribed to them.

On trips outside the pre-school a nominated member of staff (Deputy Manager or Senior Supervisor) will take a mobile phone with them, to be used in an emergency. The nominated staff member will not use their phone unless observed by another member of staff.

Staff, volunteers and students may have personal mobile phones which are kept in their bags in the kitchen. Staff may check their phones during breaks or lunchtimes. Staff will not use their mobile phones where or when children are present. All staff, students and volunteers are reminded that smart watches that have image capturing and sharing capabilities must not be worn when they are working with the children.

Staff, students and volunteers have been advised on procedures regarding social networking sites (see also the Confidentiality policy).

Visitors to the setting are reminded that mobile phones and smart watches cannot be used during their visit. (see also the Confidentiality policy).

Information disclosure and sharing

The aim of this childcare setting is to promote an environment of respect with reference to confidential information relating to the children, families or group users and the groups business (please see our confidentiality policy). However, if it becomes necessary to disclose information concerning a child and/or member of staff (if the allegation is made against a staff member/volunteer) to an outside agency, the following procedure will be followed:-

The consent of the parent/main carer of that child and/or the consent of the staff member to the disclosure will be sought first (unless it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm).

- ⌚ If it is believed that obtaining such consent would place the child at risk of significant harm, the disclosure will be made without obtaining consent (bearing in mind the public interest in safeguarding the child's welfare overrides the need to keep information confidential).

Please note:

Safeguarding is everybody's business. If you are concerned about a child or young person that you know, or who lives near you, please say something and break the silence. Parents, members of the public, and professionals can call the Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) On 01305 228558.

There are exceptions to the above procedures. If any child is thought to be in immediate danger, Pre-School staff will contact FSAL on Tel: 01305 228558 and/or the Police on Tel: 01305 222222 or 999 immediately.