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# Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding

**Policy Statement**

Our Pre-School will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

## Aims

Our aims are to:

* create an environment in our pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
* help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
* encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
* enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
* work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

**Methods**

**Staff and volunteers**

• Our designated person who coordinates child protection issues is **Tracey Dallimore**.

• We have a Lead Safeguarding Committee Member/Chairperson- **Antonia Nichols**, who supports the designated staff member on any child protection issues.

• We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.

• Applicants for posts within the pre-school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks 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 enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the pre-school or has access to the children.

• Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.

• We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.

• We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school.

• We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

**Responding to suspicions of abuse**

• We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect (detailed explanations regarding the forms of abuse are listed in the appendix)

• When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or 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 take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent’s drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent’s learning disability.

• We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability such as, abuse of children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities; Peer on peer abuse, fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.

• Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.

• Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.

• We refer concerns to the local authority children’s social care department on **01329-225379** 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.

• We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

• 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 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, 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.

**Peer on Peer Abuse**

Abusive behaviour can happen to children in pre-school and it is necessary to consider what abuse looks like, how it can be managed & what appropriate support & intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual & what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Chawton Pre-School will ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately & consistently to reduce the extent of harm to a young person, with full consideration to impact on that individual child’s emotional & mental health & well-being.

**Points to Consider**

How old is the child, where the incident happens, what explanation is given, what the child’s understanding of what’s occurred & repetition.

Once the outcomes of the incident have been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again & consider the support & future intervention required for all those involved.

**Recording Existing Injuries**

If a child arrives at Chawton Pre-School with a significant visible injury or one is discovered during the session, we ask parents and carers for information about the injury and record the injury on our existing injury form and if necessary, a body map. Parents and carers are asked to sign the record which will be kept in the child’s confidential file.

**Safeguarding Disabled Children**

Disabled children have the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, and be protected from harm. However, they are more vulnerable, possibly due to their additional needs or their lack of equal access to resources. We, at Chawton Pre-School will ensure that our disabled children are listened to and that any concerns regarding abuse are dealt with appropriately. All our staff will be given relevant training in order to have access to specialist staff in the event of any disclosure regarding abuse.

**Child Exploitation and Online Safety**

Children and young people can be exploited and bullied through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. At Chawton Pre-School we do not have any internet access within the setting, therefore all our devices are safe from online risks. However, we do talk to the children about these potential risks, depending on their understanding and use of these devices outside the Pre-School. We ask them to share their concerns with us if they are worried about something they have seen online. Any disclosures would be treated in accordance with our safeguarding procedures.

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

• Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give 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;

• 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 the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time. These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal 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.

• Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board 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 children's social care team**

• We keep a copy of ‘What to do if you're worried a child is being abused’ (HMG 2006).

document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board, which we follow.

**Informing parents**

• Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.

• We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child’s file and that 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 that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.

• This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents.

**Liaison with other bodies**

• We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. We have the current version of 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.

• We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the wellbeing of children. Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

• We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the pre-school and social services to work well together.

• Contact details for the local NSPCC are also kept.

**Allegations against staff**

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

• 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 working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.

• We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer to investigate **- Barbara Piddington 01962 876364**.

• 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 local authority’s social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken on **0300 123 3155**. 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 committee and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

**Disciplinary action**

• Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of any relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

**Training**

All staff working at Chawton Pre-School regularly update their Safeguarding training in line with Hampshire Safeguarding Children’s Board Protocols & Ofsted requirements.

• We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

• We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board

We ensure that any Safeguarding training & new information is regularly cascaded to all other staff in the setting.

• We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the Pre-School.

**Planning**

• The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left ajar.

**Curriculum**

• We introduce key elements of child protection into our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

• We create within the pre-school a culture of value and respect for the individual.

• We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

**The legal framework for this work is**:

* The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act -Revised 2012
* The Children & Families Act 2004 & 2014
* Equality Act 2010
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Data Protection Act 1984
* The Protection of Children Act 1999
* The Children (NI) Order
* The Children (Scotland) Order
* The new EYFS Framework (September 2008)
* Education Act 2002
* Adoption of Children Act 2002
* Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015
* Prevent Duty Guidance/Duty to Report FGM 2015-Revised 2019

**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.

## 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, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local 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.
* 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.

**Appendix**

**Child Abuse Definitions**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the need of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

A proportion of adults and children and young people who sexually abuse children have themselves been sexually abused as a child. They may also have been exposed as a child to domestic abuse and discontinuity of care. However, it would be quite wrong to suggest that most children who are sexually abused inevitably go on to become abusers themselves.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

* Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
* Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
* Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is defined by the World Health Organisation as: ‘all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. This is extremely painful and has serious consequences for physical and mental health. It can also result in death. FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and it is illegal to perform. It is also illegal to take a child abroad for FGM even if legal in that country. It has significant long-term physical and emotional consequence for the survivors and it has been estimated that 137,000 girls and women in the UK are affected by this practice, but this is likely to be an underestimation. FGM is sometimes also known as female circumcision. Other local terms are: Tahoor, Absum, Halalays, Khitan, Ibi, Sunna, Gudnii, Bondo and Kutairi. FGM is sometimes incorrectly believed to be an Islamic practice. This is not the case and the Islamic Sharia Council, and the Muslim College and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), have condemned the practice of FGM.FGM is classified into four categories:

* **Clitoridectomy**: partial or total removal of the clitoris and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce
* **Excision**: partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora
* **Infibulation**: narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris
* **Other**: all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

This policy was adopted by Chawton Pre-School.