

## Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

### Purpose and aims of policy

The purpose of Cygnets playgroup safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework for nursery staff in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in their care. The primary focus aims to ensure that all children trusted into the care of Cygnets playgroup are kept safe and protected from any harm.

### **Cygnets playgroup aims to:**

Create an environment to encourage children to achieve their full potential. In 2003, the government published the 'Every Child Matters' Green Paper which set out 5 outcomes that are key to children and young people's wellbeing throughout their childhood and into adolescence and adulthood. These are:

- To be healthy.
- To stay safe.
- To enjoy and achieve.
- To make a positive contribution.
- To achieve economic wellbeing.

These five outcomes are statutory universal ambitions for all statutory children's and educational services, whatever the culture, background and family circumstances of any child/young person. In this regard Cygnets staff are fully aware of the ethos of 'Every Child Matters' and are committed to integrating ethos into practice in improving the outcomes for all children within the playgroup setting. :

- We promote healthy eating within the setting through advice and education.
- We will always listen to children and promote their rights to receive good quality care. Our Playgroup believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm.
- We encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- We will provide materials and learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills including resilience and perseverance.
- Overall we will provide through our curriculum a stimulating learning environment that will equip our children with the confidence and skills to forward their transitional journey into mainstream schooling.

### **Safeguarding Responsibilities and expectations of staff.**

Cygnets playgroup has a committee who have a legal responsibility to make sure that the playgroup has an effective set of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in place and that they are adhered to should any incident, allegation or disclosure occur within the setting. The Safeguarding policy can be made available to any parent or Carer who wishes to see it. A copy of this document is placed in the procedures and policy folder within the setting and can be accessed by all members of staff. The document can also be found on the Playgroup website, in the parent policy folder in cloakroom and displayed on parent notice board.

The Playgroup also has a statutory responsibility to report any suspicions around any allegations of abuse made by a child against a member of staff, volunteer, committee member or student and this will be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). The Children's Act 1989 (section 47[1]) places a duty on the LSCB to investigate any allegation made against a member of staff. The Playgroup will follow the procedures set out in the LSCB child protection documents and as such will seek their advice on all steps taken subsequently. The Playgroup will notify OFSTED if the LSCB are investigating child protection matter related to the group.

### **DBS Checks**

Cygnets committee also has a responsibility to ensure that any person working with the children is properly vetted through the Ofsted DBS process and are safe to work with children. This includes all playgroup staff, students in placement, volunteers and committee members. DBS checks are undertaken in line with government legislation which is every 3 years. A referral to the DBS should be made if a staff member is dismissed for having harmed a child. Only after stringent checks and completion of the EY2 through Ofsted will any person be allowed to work unsupervised with any child. Anyone without a DBS check, i.e. visitors and parent helpers will be made aware of the following:

- They must always be accompanied by a member of staff when in the setting.
- They must not be involved in any intimate care of any child, i.e. taking a child to the toilet.
- They must not use toilets designated for the children.
- They must adhere to the playgroup policy for the use of media and smartphones within the setting.

### **Mobile Phones/Cameras/Smart watches/Social Media policy**

The Safeguarding Designated Officer is responsible for ensuring the acceptable, safe use and storage of all camera, technology, images, and mobile phones through the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the appropriate policies and procedures. This includes the E Safety Policy which includes Camera and Image Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable use Policy.

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- All staff, helpers and visitors must ensure that their mobile telephones/smart watches are left inside their bag or in the office during working hours.
- No member of staff should have their mobile telephone/smart watch to hand during working hours, the only exception being on outings, when all members of staff will be able to take their mobile phones to ensure reception coverage.
- If any staff member has a family emergency, the Cygnets landline may be used.
- Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into the bathrooms without prior consultation with the Leader.
- If photographs need to be taken in a bathroom i.e. (photographs of the children washing their hands) then the Leader must be told and staff supervised whilst carrying out this kind of activity. At all times the camera must be placed in a prominent place where it can be seen.
- All cameras in the Playgroup including those on staff mobile telephones/smart watches can be subject to scrutiny at any time by the safeguarding officer, Leader or Registered Person.
- Any staff member, volunteer or student found to be non compliant with this policy would face disciplinary action.
- Any other person visiting the setting should not be using a mobile phone/camera/smart watch without specific permission of the leader.
- Photos and videos taken by staff/parents at the setting or during school hours are not to be put on social media.
- Where possible staff and parents should not be Facebook friends.
- Staff should not discuss any aspect of the setting or children's behaviour over social media, which would breach the confidentiality clause. They should be wary of discussing the setting and other members of staff on social media generally.
- Photographs of the children will not be taken from the site at any time.

### **Safeguarding Training**

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

- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.
- All staff and volunteers receive regular training and supervision in safeguarding issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance. Training is updated every 2 years.
- All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to child protection, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All staff, students and

volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Safeguarding Designated Officer without delay.

- All staff have awareness of radicalisation and female genital mutilation, the staff are made aware of their role and responsibility, as well as the process of reporting concerns. Training may include PREVENT and FGM training.

The committee has appointed a Safeguarding Designated Officer (SDO) who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues within the setting. In the absence of the SDO the playgroup has a deputy SDO and one or both of these officers will be available during Playgroup hours. The Playgroup also has a designated Safeguarding Committee Member who can be consulted should any incident, allegation or disclosure occur within the setting. The names of these officers are situated within the Playgroup foyer by the play area door.

Name: Carrie Gelder (DSO)

Name: Jane Tillyard (Deputy DSO)

Name: Richard Lloyd (Committee DSO)

Our primary responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of all children in our care and to this end, the playgroup has a statutory duty to the children, parents/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly, if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. In addition, if any parent or Guardian has a concern for a child, please consult with one of the officers above. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Designated Officer to ensure that all Safeguarding issues raised within the setting are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency.

Should a member of staff not be satisfied that the DSO has not followed procedures effectively, that staff member may decide to make a referral themselves.

### **Safeguarding Procedures**

Cygnets playgroup ethos is that all adults including, members of staff and parent/Guardians have a duty to report any known or suspected abuse to Children and Young People's Social Care or any immediate risk to the police. These agencies will then give advice on the appropriate action to take.

Should any child following referral become subject to a Child Protection Plan it will be the Safeguarding Designated Officer's role to attend any child Protection Case Conference or Core group Meeting. The SDO may also be asked to submit a written report on the subject child. Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member i.e. Early Years Consultant, Educational Psychologist, Social Worker, or Health Visitor, it will be the responsibility of that professional to make a formal referral to Children's Services and to record the disclosure. This should be shared with the SDO.

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The playgroup have procedures in place for handling allegations of abuse made by a child against any members of staff, (including the playgroup leader, playgroup staff, volunteers, students and committee members). Under these circumstances the Playgroup has a statutory responsibility to report any suspicions around allegations to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). The Children's Act 1989 (section 47[1]) places a duty on the LSCB to investigate any allegation made against a member of staff. The Playgroup will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers. Any member of staff, student, committee member or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures policy. The Pre-School will notify OFSTED if the LSCB are investigating child protection matter related to the group. The pre-school will also seek advice from the LADO, all relevant contact details are found on the final page of this policy.

### **Recognising Concerns, signs, symptoms and indicators of Child Abuse**

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

#### **Physical Abuse:**

This involves hitting (sometimes with the use of a weapon), shaking, throwing, burning, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse. This is known as Fabricated Induced Illness (historically Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy) and is where a child presents with an illness that is fabricated and/or purposely induced by the child's carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment for investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, or purposely induce illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet.

#### **Sexual Abuse:**

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

Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations made by a parent, disclosures by a child, genital soreness, unusual bruising around the child's genitalia and upper thighs, sexually transmitted diseases, sexualised language that is not consistent to the child's age and stage of development and sexualised play, drawings and behaviour (sometimes with other children). A sexually abused child may also present with significant aggressive tendencies or present as withdrawn. There may also be observed attachment difficulties with the child parent/Carer.

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**Emotional abuse:**

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

Signs and symptoms may include, observed extremes of discipline where a child is shouted out and put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include carers placing inappropriate unsafe or developmental expectations upon a child. Emotional abuse may also include the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by the adults caring for them.

A parent/carer is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having contact with peers or are treated differently from another child within the same family, (scapegoating).

Symptoms can include extremes of emotion, presenting as withdrawn, aggressive or clingy/attention seeking in order to receive love and attention. They often present with low self-esteem, are underachieving, are fearful, may lack boundaries with strangers and are often eager to please.

**Neglect:**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, educational or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, overall psychological, emotional and educational development and attainments. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter, or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical and sexual harm or ill health.

Indicators of all forms of abuse and neglect include:

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones.
- Excessive fearful or withdrawn tendencies.
- Aggressive and unmanageable behaviour that is considered beyond the normal age-related behaviour of a child.
- Unexplained injuries to a child with conflicting reports from parents/carers or staff as to how the injuries occurred.
- Repeated injuries.
- Repeated illness or injuries where appropriate medical assistance is not forthcoming.
- Sexualised behaviour/conversation not expected from the age of a child.
- Frozen watchfulness in the presence of a carer or parent.

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## Dealing and recording with Allegations of Abuse

The Playgroup is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively. The Playgroup will not carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. On discovering an allegation of abuse, the Safeguarding Designated Officer will immediately refer the case to the local statutory child protection agencies.

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

- Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, they will report this to the Leader/Safeguarding Designated Officer immediately.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and securely maintained. Information recorded will always include: the exact words spoken by the child, the exact position and type of injuries or marks seen and the exact observation of any abusive incident including any other witnesses.
- In addition pre-school staff will record full details of the alleged incident/observation/disclosure, together with; details/contact numbers of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff. The Pre-school will only record what has been disclosed, giving purely factual evidence.
- The Leader and the Designated Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the manager or Safeguarding Designated Officer, the Registered Person will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation or and will refer the senior member of staff (LADO) investigation to the local authority designated officer.
- Ofsted will be informed within 14 days of the allegation.
- Staff will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.

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

- Listen fully to all the child has to say and remain calm and reassuring to the child.

- Make no observable judgement.
- Ask open questions that encourages the child to speak in their own words.
- Ensure the child is safe, reassured, comfortable and not left alone.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept; such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told.

The Playgroup will always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding factor.

Where a child has made an allegation against a parent/carer consideration must be given as to whether the parent/carer should be informed as this may put the child at further risk of harm. Further advice under these circumstances must be sought from Children's services.

### Referring Allegations to Child Protection Agencies

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

The DSO will make a referral to the local children's services department expediently.

### Multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH)

01202 228866

[mash6dorset.cc.gcsx.gov.uk](http://mash6dorset.cc.gcsx.gov.uk)

[www.dorsetlscb.co.uk](http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk)

Interagency referral form <http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk/site/advice-for-people-workingwithchildren>

The Playgroup is committed to reviewing its Safeguarding Children/Child Protection policy and procedures at regular intervals. Current legislation is every 2 years.

The next review will take place in March 2024

Signed:  ..... Chairperson

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