

Little Oaks Day Nursery

Safeguarding Children Policy

Staff working in the nursery have a duty of care towards the children attending and this duty brings with it the responsibility to ensure that all efforts are made to safeguard children from suspected and actual harm. Children attending the nursery have a right to feel safe and staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a responsibility to act on any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare and well-being.

The Legal framework for this policy

- Children Acts (1989/2004)
- The Childcare Act (2006)
- Working together to Safeguard children (2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we provide, staff will often be the first people who sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care may be subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well being of children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child.

All staff will be familiar with their own responsibilities to act swiftly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have about any child or member of staff at the nursery. The nursery will follow the procedures set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board Guidance and as such will seek advice on all steps taken subsequently. The nursery has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to the Family Front Door Service who, under the children Act 1989 have an obligation to investigate such matters.

Staff must not comment either publicly or in private about a parent's supposed or actual behaviour, strict confidentiality will be observed at all times. Staff must raise any concerns initially with the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL) who will discuss these concerns with the manager/registered person on a need to know basis and appropriate action will be considered. Staff responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse and all related information must be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Parents and families will be

treated with respect in a non-judgemental manner whilst investigations by the appropriate authorities are being carried out in the best interests of the child.

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children from abuse. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone who has not received their Enhanced DBS clearance check and all our staff will receive safeguarding training. We know how important staff ratios are and ensure that we follow the legal requirements for the minimum numbers of staff present with the children at any time as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

Little Oaks Day Nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of the nursery staff.
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children i.e. bullying.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding issues and procedures when they register with the nursery and kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy.

What is child abuse?

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Staff in the nursery recognise that child abuse can and does happen in all types of families. The different social and cultural backgrounds of the children do not constitute barriers to child abuse and in most cases children are abused by individuals known to them, rather than strangers. Child abuse can take many formats, but all instances can be broadly categorised under one of four headings; neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. The following identifies some possible manifestations of child abuse; however these lists are not exhaustive.

Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, which may result in the serious impairment of the child’s health and development. For example; poor hygiene, untreated medical problems, emaciation or under nourishment. Staff may notice behavioural signs such as a child who always seems to be hungry, is constantly tired or talks of being left alone.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the parent/carer.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.

- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the Family Front Door Service will be notified.

Physical abuse – physical signs may involve unexplained bruising in unlikely areas, facial bruising, hand/finger marks, bite marks, burns, lacerations or abrasions. Staff may notice certain behavioural signs that also indicate physical abuse such as a child that shy's away from physical contact, is withdrawn or aggressive towards others or their behaviour changes suddenly.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member on an incident form and body map.
- The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.
- Such discussions will be recorded and a signature obtained from the parent/carer who will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, the Family Front Door Services should be informed immediately.

Sexual Abuse – Physical signs may include bruising consistent with being held firmly, discomfort in walking/sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, discharge or blood on under clothes, or loss of appetite. Behavioural signs may include drawings or play showing indicators of sexual activity, sexual explicit language, knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, seductive behaviour towards others, poor self-esteem or a child who is withdrawn.

Procedure:

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSL/Nursery manager.
- The matter will be referred to the Family Front Door Service immediately.

Emotional Abuse – Physical signs of emotional abuse may include a general failure to thrive, not meeting expected developmental milestones and behaviourally a child may be attention seeking, tells lies, have an inability to have fun, low self-esteem, speech disorders or be inappropriately affectionate towards others.

Procedure:

- The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the DSL/Manger.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the Family Front Door Service will be notified.

Domestic Abuse – The government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behavior, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Children living in an environment where domestic abuse takes place are also at risk from both physical and emotional abuse and must be safeguarded.

Procedure:

- The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the DSL/Manger.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the Family Front Door Service will be notified.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – is a collective term for procedures, which include the removal or partial removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical purpose. It has been illegal in the UK since 1985.

FGM is a cultural specific practice in certain African, Asian and Middle Eastern Countries. Families residing in this country may either carry out the procedure illegally in this country or send female members home for the procedure. The procedure is often carried out by another female member of the family without pain relief or proper medical equipment. In many cases females suffer long term emotional trauma, medical conditions or infections, difficulties giving birth and in some cases death.

FGM is considered child abuse and it is therefore important that if you suspect it has or may be about to happen to a child 18 or under that you inform the settings DSL or Deputy DSL so a referral can be made to Social Services/Police.

Procedure:

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSL/Nursery Manager.
- The matter will be referred to the Family Front Door Service immediately.

However, when identifying any potential instances of abuse, staff must at all times be aware that children may demonstrate individual or combinations of the indicators detailed, but may not be the subject of abuse. Individual or isolated incidents do not necessarily indicate abuse. However, staff should always remain vigilant and must not ignore warnings signs and contact the Family Front Door Service at any stage for support.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosers

Staff will make an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name.
- Child's address
- Child's age and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- EXACT words spoken by the child/injuries or marks seen
- Name of person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent/carer.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of staff must know the procedures for recording information. It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Family Front Door and OFSTED. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have of concerns with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Family Front Door Service and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

All staff will attend Safeguarding Training or complete the E Learning training and receive basic training as part of their induction.

Staff and Volunteering

A senior member of staff is identified within the nursery as the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL), in their absence the 'Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DDSL) assumes this responsibility. The designated person will undertake specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The named DSL at Little Oaks Day Nursery is Jenny Cale.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children and the deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision.
- Applicants for the post within the nursery are clearly informed that their positions are exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of

the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and challenge incorrect information.

- All applicants must have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before starting at the nursery, once a year complete a self-disclosure form and be part of the government update service. All staff must disclose to the Manager/Registered Provide any information that may affect their suitability to work with children and also about the disqualification of anyone living in their household.
- We abide by OFSTED requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children.
- Volunteers, including students do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Independent Safeguarding authority of Children Act requirements in the respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise lead to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children.

Informing Parents

We recognise that good communication with parents is crucial in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively. Parents are normally the first point of contact, if suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating Officer will inform the parents.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know by the Manager or DSL. Any information shared with another agency will be shared under the guidance of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board and the GDPR Law will be followed.

Support to Families

- Little Oaks Day Nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery.
- The nursery continues to welcome a child and their family whilst investigation are being made in relation to abuse within the home.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Employees of the Nursery/ Allegations of abuse by member of staff

If an allegation is made against a member of staff the registered provider will immediately inform the Family Front Door Service. It is important to take a name of the person spoken to and they will advise on the next steps to be taken. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will also be on hand to convene a strategy meeting and offer advice and support. OFSTED and the Disclosure and Barring Service will also need to be informed and this will be investigated.

- Staff will co-operate with the investigating authority.
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation
- All investigation/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file. Records on the alleged perpetrator will be kept until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years if that period of time is longer. This includes records of people no longer associated with the provision.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.
- Allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (Family Front Door Service) and founded allegations will result in the termination of employment. OFSTED will be notified immediately of the allegation. The nursery will also be required to notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by the allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.
- If an allegation of abuse is made about the nursery manager /registered person, the person making the complaint is likely to contact OFSTED, Family Front Door Service or the Police directly.

Whistleblowing – is the term used when someone who works in or for an organisation wishes to raise concerns about malpractice within the organisation. In the case of local authority safeguarding services, this is likely to be about a dangerous or illegal activity, or widespread or systemic failure in relation to children and young people and/or the services they receive. Concerns may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, students or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as unlawful, failing to comply with the settings policies and procedures, poor practice or improper conduct.

Whistle blowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. It only applies when you have no vested interest and you are acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that you have observed. Employees are often the first to realise that there is something wrong, however may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the nursery.

The nursery is committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, students, agency staff and all other

individuals that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the nurseries work, to come forward and voice those concerns. Staff should raise concerns via supervision meetings or with the manager or registered person, preferably in writing. Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing to the manager or registered person (for example if their concern involves these people), should share their concern directly with Ofsted or the Family Front Door where appropriate.

Useful Numbers

- Ofsted complaints, investigation and enforcement team – 03001231231
- Family Front Door Service (FFD) – 01905 822666
- Emergency Duty Team (EDT) - Evenings/Weekends 01905 768020
- Safeguarding Quality Assurance (SQA) and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – 01905 845553