



# Noah's Ark Pre-School

## Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff, FGM and Prevent Duty)

### Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our safeguarding policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

### Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

#### *Key commitment 1*

As a member of the Early Years Alliance we are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

#### Staff, students and volunteers

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is: Bettina Campion. In her absence Theresa D'Souza is her designated deputy.
- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is: Richard Mendez Caina. We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures through staff meetings, AGM, welcome pack, parent notice board, newsletters and website.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.

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- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service 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 Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the disclosure and barring number
  - the date the disclosure was obtained and:
  - details of who obtained it.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements 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 a visitor's book for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure that children are not photographed or filmed on video for any purpose other than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- We request that parents report their children's absences to us via telephone call or email communication. Explained and unexplained absences are noted in our register and/or communications book. Parents will be asked to explain their child's unreported absence upon return.

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### *Key commitment 2*

As a member of the Early Years Alliance we are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015).

### *Responding to suspicions of abuse*

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be 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;
  - Signs of neglect such as bad teeth
  - 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 disabled children; 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.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.

- 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 is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority's children's social care department and co-operate fully with any subsequent investigation. In some cases, this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 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 young people 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 for a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to 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.

*Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives 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 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 Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.

#### *Making a referral to the local authority social care team*

- The Early Years Alliance's publication 'Safeguarding Children' contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the local social care team, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015).
- We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Early Years Alliance.
- The Single Point of Access (SPA) started operating from January 2013. The Single Point of Access will offer advice/ support/ guidance to professionals, families and the public where there are concerns about a child or young person. All calls will be reviewed through a single number 0208 547 5008.
- Staff will make a timely referral to SPA if there is concern that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm. This will be done by telephone initially and followed up by a written referral. As much information as possible will be made available including names, address and contact details including telephone numbers.
- For non-urgent referrals an Interagency referral form will be completed. Interagency referrals will be returned to the SPA.
- All members of staff are familiar with SPA referrals in accordance with Royal Borough of Kingston procedures for recording and reporting.

#### *Informing parents*

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- 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 further danger.
  - 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 Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 worker will inform parents.
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- *Liaison with other agencies*
  - We work within the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
  - We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
  - We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including SPA (02058 547 5008) and Safeguarding (0208 547 6036) to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together.
  - We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children or where an allegation of abuse against a member of staff (whether the allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere) (0300 1231231).
  - Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept (0808 800 5000).

#### *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 anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.

We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with children and refer this to the Kingston LADO team

Email: [LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:LADO@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

Phone: 07774 332675

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Examples of inappropriate behaviour may include the following:

- Inappropriate sexual comments;
  - Excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate.
  - Inappropriate handling of children including hitting
- We follow the guidance of the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
  - We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone 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. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this. Tel (0300 1231231).
  - 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 due to engaging in activities that caused concern to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Agency (ISA) of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable people) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

### *Key commitment 3*

As members of the Early Years Alliance we are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### *Training*

- All staff involved in the setting will attend relevant safeguarding training provided by the Borough to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training includes Safeguarding level 1, 2 and 3 as well as Safeguarding forums.
- During each staff meeting, safeguarding is a key point on our agenda and team members are encouraged to talk about concerns.
- We ensure that the designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended and performed by the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

### *Curriculum*

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.



### *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 Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### *Support to families*

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, students 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, providing information, 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 will 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 Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership.

### *Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)*

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation. It occurs mostly in 5-8 year olds. It is more difficult to identify girls at risk and staff should be vigilant of children being taken out for lengthy periods to countries in Africa such as Somalia, Nigeria by a parent or relation and look out for symptoms as described in the NSPCC leaflet or website. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison. FGM should be reported to the police as well as our normal channels of communications.

### *Prevent Duty*

Noah's Ark is subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of its functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards for learning, development and care for children from 0-5, thereby assisting their personal, social and emotional development and understanding of the world.

### *Curriculum*

- We ensure that our daily activities and routines promote British Values such as democracy and respect enabling children to challenge extremist views.

### **Legal framework**

#### *Primary legislation*

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 section 26
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM Act 2003)

#### *Secondary Legislation*

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance