

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Amendment History

Revision	Author	Description of change	Date updated
1	Nikki Chadwick	WACPC Procedures added to policy	November 2004
2	Karen Walls	Amendment history added and general changes in wording and layout	November 2005
3	Karen Walls	Change from WACPC to LSCB and update footer	September 2006
KASC policy	Carol Hooper	Adapted from existing policy	September 2006
4	CH/SM	Merge KASC and Playgroup policies, amend contact details and names, update Ofsted reference	August 2007
5	CH	Amend names, change ref to WSCB, add appendices titles	February 2008
6	CH/ SM/ Alison Foulds	Reviewed, add reference to 'Safeguarding Children', no other change	June 2009
7	AF/CH	Reference to SENCO rather than named person. Appendix 1 to be added to staff handbook	June 2010
8	CH/HS	Update designated person	March 2012
9	CH	Update names of Designated Persons and Board Director; refer to WCC Child Protection Quick Guides	January 2013
10	CH/HS	Renaming policy to add 'Safeguarding'; clarification of safeguarding statement; update telephone numbers	June 2013
11	CH & Lucy Bosley	Reverse title to 'Safeguarding Statement & Child Protection Policy'; amend list of Designated Persons following completion of training; incorporate safeguarding statement into policy	November 2014

12	CH/SF	Existing safeguarding policy reviewed and merged with Warwickshire Model Policy. New policy created.	December 2016
13	CH/SF	General review to ensure no duplication with other documents and that policy and procedure reflect practice.	May 2018
14	CH/SF	General review	May 2019

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Safeguarding statement and principles

The Playgroup's safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for leadership and management and also affect the judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners.

This policy is available on the Playgroup website and all staff, Board Members and regular volunteers are required to read it and confirm they have done so in writing before commencing work in Playgroup. It forms a part of our refresher training programme so that all members of staff are updated of any changes and its principles are embedded in our practice.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

We make it clear to parents in their child's registration contract and in regular newsletters dealing with all aspects of safeguarding that their child's welfare is key; parents are asked to read and sign the following statement as part of the registration contract before their child starts sessions at playgroup and annually thereafter: -

1. 'I understand that the safeguarding of my child is of utmost importance, and that Playgroup staff will report concerns about my child to relevant third parties. I understand that where possible this will be discussed with me beforehand, but that my child's best interests will be paramount in such cases, and if necessary advice will be sought before contacting me.'

Further details of specific steps we take to further this aim are set out in our policies and procedures, which should all be read as part of our safeguarding policy – it is not a separate issue but integral to everything we do.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and Board Members and are consistent with those of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

Policy principles

- Playgroup's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- Children who are safe and feel safe are better equipped to learn
- Playgroup is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Representatives of the whole Playgroup community of children,

parents, staff, volunteers and Board Members will therefore be involved in reviewing, shaping and developing the Playgroup's safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.

- We strive to nurture and develop the whole child. We recognise that not only do children have rights (enshrined in the 1989 Children Act), but also that they have needs. If basic needs are neglected, human beings are damaged and healthy development will be impaired. Before they can be fully receptive to what is offered in our setting, each child needs:
 - love and affection
 - security
 - provision of basic care
 - stimulation and teaching from an interested adult
 - promotion of self-esteem
 - guidance and control
 - independence
 - to be trusted with responsibility
 - approval
 - promotion of general emotional well being
(NSPCC 1988/89 Campaign: Putting the Child First)
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm at home, in the community or in Playgroup
- All staff members will maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.
- If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to Warwickshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, any staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some stage.
- Children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the Playgroup's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to children, parents and other partners

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the

provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

All references to '**Kineton Playgroup**' or '**Playgroup**' in this policy include Playgroup, KASC, Breakfast Club and Holiday Club.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Playgroup, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or regular voluntary capacity.

Board Member refers to all the trustees on the Board.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2018)** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2018)** covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Further information is provided in the **Guidance for safer working practice (GSWP) for those working with children and young people in education settings** (Safer Recruitment Consortium, October 2016). Together, these provide the framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in pre-schools. Copies of these documents are kept in the staff room.

The Manager, Deputy Managers, Safeguarding Leads and Board Member responsible for safeguarding must read all of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

All staff must read Part One of Working Together to Safeguard Children. Board Members must read section two. The Manager, Deputy Managers, and Safeguarding Leads must read all parts of the document.

All staff and Board Members must read GSWP.

'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'

This poster and flowchart provides non-statutory advice which helps practitioners (and everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect, and to take appropriate action. A copy is displayed on the staff room notice board and the safeguarding noticeboard in the children's cloakroom.

In the UK, more than 50,000 children are annually subject to a child protection plan. Research suggests that one child a week dies from abuse, around 20 per cent of children will suffer some form of abuse, one child in six is exposed to violence in the home and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused and neglected. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem.

Due to their day-to-day contact with children, staff in Playgroup are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in Playgroup when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all Playgroup staff are alert to the signs of abuse, are approachable and trusted by children/students, listen actively to **Safeguarding Statement & Child Protection Policy**

children and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. Playgroup will act on identified concerns and will provide early help to prevent concerns from escalating.

Roles and responsibilities – key personnel

The **safeguarding lead (SL)** is Carol Hooper, Manager.

Contact details: 01926 640010 / 07484 524390 (out of hours)

The **deputy safeguarding lead** is Sally Flynn, Deputy Manager, Business and Administration

Contact details: 01926 640010

The nominated child protection Board Member is Sally Seddon.

Contact details: 01926 640010

The Safeguarding Lead (SL)

- is a senior member of staff from Playgroup's leadership team and therefore has the status and authority within the Playgroup to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at Playgroup, which will not be delegated although the activities of the SL may be delegated to appropriately trained deputies
- is appropriately trained, receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals and regularly (at least annually) updates their knowledge and skills to keep up with any developments relevant to their role
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the Playgroup community
- works with Kineton Primary School as part of a local safeguarding cluster
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, looked after children and young carers
- has a working knowledge of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) procedures
- has an understanding of the EHSAP process to ensure effective assessment and understanding of children's additional needs in order to inform appropriate provision of early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged, but kept separate from, the child's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to MASH or the Police as appropriate
- notifies Children's Social Care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- ensures that, when a child leaves Playgroup, all child protection records are passed to the new setting separately from the main child file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt. If the child is the subject of an open case to Children's Social Care, the child's social worker is also informed
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences, strategy meetings and multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meetings
- co-ordinates Playgroup's contribution to child protection plans as part of core groups, attending and actively participating in core group meetings
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the WSCB

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- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct
- has a working knowledge of relevant national guidance in respect of all specific safeguarding issues highlighted in paragraph 43 (pages 12/13) and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, ensuring that all staff receive necessary training, information and guidance
- ensures that the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with the whole Playgroup community of children, parents, staff, volunteers and Board Members
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy available publicly, i.e. on Playgroup's website
- ensures parents are aware of Playgroup's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- ensures that under Working Together 2018 refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer (DO) in the Local Authority within one working day prior to any internal investigation; and to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as appropriate.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s)

Is/are appropriately trained to the same level as the SL and, in the absence of the SL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the SL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The Playgroup Board ensures that Playgroup:

- appoints a Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- ensures that the SL role is explicit in the role holder's job description and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer
- has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff code of conduct, that are consistent with WSCB and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on Playgroup's
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and volunteers including allegations made against the Manager and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- develops an induction strategy that ensures all staff, including the Manager, and volunteers, receive information about Playgroup's safeguarding arrangements, Staff Code of Conduct and the role of the SL on induction
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Manager, and volunteers receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training and updates as required (at least annually) to provide them

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with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with any requirements of WSCB. The training strategy will also ensure that the SL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the SL's duties above

- ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with copies of or access to Playgroup's child protection and safeguarding
- contributes to inter-agency working and plans
- participates in the EHSAP process and offers to initiate EHSAPs for children/students with additional needs in order to provide a co-ordinated offer of early help
- equips children with the age-appropriate skills needed to keep them safe

The Playgroup Board nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Manager.

It is the responsibility of the Playgroup Board to ensure that Playgroup's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority, WSCB and national guidance.

The Manager

- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the SL and deputy/s to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of children and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that children are provided with opportunities to learn about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- refers all allegations that a child has been harmed by or that children may be at risk of harm from a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority within one working day prior to any internal investigation
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the Designated Officer
- appoints a case officer who will be a member of the senior leadership team to investigate allegations concerning members of staff and volunteers and/or act as a point of contact for the member of staff/volunteer against whom the allegation is made

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

To meet and maintain Playgroup's responsibilities towards children, agreed standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all children with respect

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- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving children in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among children
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in children's behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding Playgroup's safeguarding statement and child protection policy, staff code of conduct and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force and physical intervention only as a last resort and in compliance with Playgroup procedures and WSCB guidance
- referring all concerns about a child's safety and welfare to the SL or, if necessary, directly to the Police or MASH
- following Playgroup's rules with regard to communication and relationships with children, including via social media

Please also refer to Playgroup's code of conduct for staff.

Abuse of position of trust

All Playgroup staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards children must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of Playgroup staff and a child under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that child is over the age of consent.

Playgroup's staff code of conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than others. Several factors may contribute to that increased vulnerability, including prejudice and discrimination; isolation; social exclusion; communication issues; a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur; as well as an individual child's personality, behaviour, disability, mental and physical health needs and family circumstances.

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs

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- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- looked after by the Local Authority or otherwise living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying behaviours
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Help and use of the Early Help Single Assessment and Process (EHSAP)

Playgroup recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. All Playgroup staff are trained to notice any concerns about children which may help to identify that they would benefit from early help.

Children and families may need support from a wide range of local agencies. Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, Police), Playgroup will use the EHSAP to complete an early help assessment and identify what help the child and family require to prevent their needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989 or the current legislation.

Playgroup is committed to working in partnership with children, parents and other agencies to:

- identify situations in which children and/or their families would benefit from early help;
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help, using the EHSAP process; and
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, developing an action plan that will focus on activity to improve the child's outcomes.

Playgroup will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any child who:

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- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs;
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- is in a family whose circumstances present challenges for the child, such as adult substance abuse, adult mental ill health, domestic abuse;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; and/or
- is particularly vulnerable in any of the ways identified above.

The EHSAP can only be effective if it is undertaken with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. The EHSAP should involve the family as well as all the professionals who are working with them.

Playgroup will keep the needs and circumstances of children receiving early help under constant review. If the child's situation does not improve and/or the child's parents and/or the child do not consent to early help or the EHSAP process being initiated, Playgroup will make a judgement about whether, without help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral to MASH may be necessary.

Attendance

It is recognised that attendance at Playgroup is important to the well-being of all our children and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at Playgroup. Attendance is monitored closely and action taken when patterns of absence give rise to concern. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. The Manager and SL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 requires the Board to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online where age appropriate, through teaching and learning opportunities.

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through the personal, social and emotional development (PSED) prime area of the Early Years Foundation Stage and through all aspects of Playgroup life. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children are taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children and parents are also reminded about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures. Playgroup continually promotes an ethos of respect for children and children are encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Staff are made aware of and are alert to the risks and issues associated with young people sending, receiving and/or disseminating indecent images of themselves and other young people, which is widely referred to as 'sexting'.

It is recognised that a young person may choose to share indecent images with another young person in the context of a romantic relationship and that she or he may do so without any intention to cause harm or distress to anybody. Although technically an offence, 'sexting' of that nature is referred to as 'experimental sexting' and it is usually not necessary or appropriate to criminalise young people in those circumstances.

However, there are clear risks associated with such behaviour. Staff are trained to be vigilant and to notice and record any concerns about young people sending and receiving indecent images, which includes listening to what young people say to each other and to staff, as they do with any other safeguarding concern.

When concerns are identified, staff will always speak to children and will inform parents about their concerns unless there is good reason to believe that doing so would place the child at increased risk of significant harm. The SL will also need to consider the Fraser guidelines in making a judgement about whether or not to respect a young person's request not to inform his/her parents/carers.

N.B. Children under the age of 13 are unable to consent to sexual activity. Any imagery containing sexual activity by under 13 year olds will therefore be referred to the Police.

Support for children, families and staff involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support children, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person (usually the SL) who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from children or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our safeguarding statement and child protection policy, whistleblowing policy, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are investigated by the Manager.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under Playgroup's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under Playgroup's child protection procedures.

Whistle blowing if staff have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague - including visiting professionals and volunteers - towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood a situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Playgroup's whistle blowing policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence, and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Staff are expected to report all concerns about poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues - including what may seem minor contraventions of Playgroup's staff code of conduct – to the Manager; to facilitate proactive and early intervention in order to maintain appropriate boundaries and a safe culture that protect children and reduce the risk of serious abuse in Playgroup.

Concerns or complaints about the Manager should be reported to the chair of the Board, whose contact details are displayed in the staff room for any member of staff to use in such an instance.

Staff may also report concerns about suspected abuse or neglect directly to MASH or the Police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

Staff can also contact the Designated Officer in the Local Authority, who is responsible for the co-ordination of responses to allegations against people who work with children, by submitting a 'Warwickshire MASH - Position of Trust Referral' form or via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 01926 414144.

The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 between 8.00am and 8.00pm Monday to Friday or e mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

The NSPCC whistle blowing helpline and contact numbers for MASH, the Police and the LADO are all displayed in the staff room.

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, it must be accepted that some professionals do pose a serious risk to children and Playgroup must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. However, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that allegations are investigated fairly, quickly and consistently and that all parties are protected. In the event of suspension Playgroup will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

As stated above, all allegations against staff should be reported to the Manager. Allegations against the Manager should be reported to the chair of the Board.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to the Police or Children's Social Care via the MASH if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and WSCB's inter-agency safeguarding procedures, under section 6 of Managing Allegations Against People Who Work With Children.

Staff, parents and Board Members are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a member of staff who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at Playgroup or historical allegations will be reported to the Police.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, Playgroup will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Board Members who will have direct contact with children and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which will include:

- Playgroup's safeguarding statement and child protection policy
- signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- responding to disclosure of abuse or neglect by a child
- reporting and recording arrangements
- staff code of conduct
- details of the SLs

NB All of the above will be explained before a new member of staff, Board Member or volunteer has direct contact with children in Playgroup. Playgroup's Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct will be part of the day one induction training and staff will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood both documents and undertake to comply with them.

All staff, volunteers and Board Members will receive appropriate and regularly updated safeguarding and child protection training as required (at least annually) and at staff meetings, to provide them with the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively in line with statutory guidance and any requirements of WSCB.

The SL will attend training for newly appointed SLs and refresher training every two years delivered by Warwickshire County Council's Education Safeguarding Service. That training will include up to date information about WSCB inter-agency procedures. In addition, the SL will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access WSCB inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, young carers and risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

In addition, members of the senior leadership team will attend safer recruitment training and Playgroup will ensure that there are at least two members of the leadership team and/or Board Members that have attended safer recruitment training.

Safer recruitment

Playgroup endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff and allow 'safe' volunteers to work with children by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 together with WSCB and Playgroup's Safer Recruitment and Employment policy.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

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- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role which will include an enhanced DBS check
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed by a panel of at least two Playgroup leaders/Board Members, if shortlisted.

Playgroup will also:

- ensure that every job description and person specification for roles in Playgroup includes a description of the role holder's responsibility for safeguarding
- ask at least one question at interview for every role in Playgroup about the candidate's attitude to safeguarding and motivation for working with children
- obtain references for all candidates who are made an offer of employment
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK

All relevant staff are made aware of the disqualification and disqualification by association legislation.

Playgroup maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken and ensures that the record is maintained in accordance with section 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and guidance issued by Warwickshire County Council.

Regulated Activity

Playgroups are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

Board Members

All Board Members will be the subject of Enhanced DBS checks through the Ofsted EY2 process.

Volunteers

Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the Playgroup and contact with children. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

Supervised volunteers

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the Playgroup's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

Contractors

The Playgroup checks the identity of all regular contractors working on site when children are present and requests DBS checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity.

Site security

Visitors to the Playgroup, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given an identity badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the Playgroup's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in Playgroup are kept safe. The Manager will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Behaviour Management

Playgroup's behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly. This policy is transparent to staff, parents and children.

Record Keeping

Playgroup will maintain safeguarding (including early help) and child protection records in accordance with the guidance document provided by WCC Education Safeguarding Service Child Protection Record Keeping Guidance.

Playgroup will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to MASH immediately;
- keep records in a folder in a meticulous chronological order;
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving pre-school or school when a child moves

Safeguarding and child protection records will be maintained independently from the child's Playgroup file and a separate record is kept of which children are the subjects of such records. Such records will only be accessible to the Safeguarding Lead and such members of the Playgroup leadership team as need to be aware of them.

The recommended format for all staff to record any safeguarding or child protection observations or concerns about a child is the WSCB proforma Logging A Concern About A Child's Safety And Welfare (Form C) also known as the 'Green form'.

Such records will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations describing the child's behaviour, appearance, statements/remarks made to staff or other children and observations of interactions between the child, other children, members of staff and/or parents/carers that give rise to concern. Where possible and without interpretation, the exact words spoken by the child or parent/carer will be recorded. Records will be signed, dated and timed by the member of staff making the record.

Records of safeguarding/child protection observations or concerns can be completed electronically or as a paper version but it is most important that all staff use one consistent system for the recording of concerns and that all records are passed to the Safeguarding Lead, who should complete the form to confirm what action has been taken.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Manager or SL, who will advise them to submit a Freedom of Information request for consideration.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent Playgroup staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child, family and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from the SL.

It is reasonable for staff to discuss day-to-day concerns about children with colleagues in order to ensure that children's general needs are met in Playgroup. However, staff should report all child protection and safeguarding concerns to the SL or Manager or – in the case of concerns about the Manager – to the chair of the Board. The person receiving the referral will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in education failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 emphasises that any member of staff can contact and/or make a referral to MASH if they are concerned about a child.

WSCB's guidance 'Information Sharing in Child Protection' is Appendix 9 of the WSCB inter-agency child protection procedures and can be accessed at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscbresources.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

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All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 2018 principles. Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Record of concern forms (Form C – Green forms) and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access to sensitive information. Any sensitive information that needs to be stored on portable devices such as laptop computers or tablets or on portable media such as a CD or flash drive will be password protected or encrypted and kept in locked storage.

Playgroup's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and children on request.

Trip arrangements

All trip activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. When children attend off-site activities, including visits within Kineton and off-site trips, effective child protection arrangements will be in place.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so safeguards must be put in place.

To protect children we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications);
- seek parental consent;
- use only the child's first name with an image;
- ensure children are appropriately dressed; and
- encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Online Safety

Children and young people commonly use electronic equipment including mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis to access the internet and share

content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Those technologies and the internet are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. Unfortunately, however, some adults and young people will use those technologies to harm children. That harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Children may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and children are not allowed to access those sites in Playgroup. Many children own or have access to hand held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community. Children may not use mobile phones in the Playgroup building.

Cyberbullying and sexting by children will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures (see 'Sexting' below).

Online communication between staff and children

Staff also receive advice regarding personal online activity, use of social networking and electronic communication with children, about which there are strict rules. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be the subject of a referral to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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 (this used to be

called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs 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 a 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 frequently to 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, although 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 a 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 in 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.

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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018).

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has

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been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the SL.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries;
- show signs of pain or discomfort;
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather;
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming;
- look unkempt and uncared for;
- change their eating habits;
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships;
- appear fearful;
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety;
- self-harm;
- frequently miss Playgroup or arrive late;
- show signs of not wanting to go home;
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn;
- challenge authority;
- become disinterested in Playgroup activities;
- be constantly tired or preoccupied;
- be wary of physical contact;
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol; and/or
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age and/or stage of development.
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends' or adults recently acquainted with the child's family

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach and the rest of their

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childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking action

Any child in any family in any Playgroup could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “It could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, contact MASH or call 999;
- report your concern to the SL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern, using a Form C (Green form); and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

If a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about a child’s welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a child may be at risk but have no ‘real’ evidence. The child’s behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the child if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the same record of concern form Form C (Green form) to record these early concerns. If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the child, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the SL.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help/EHSAP process.

If a child discloses to a member of staff or volunteer

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual. Their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell. They may have lost all trust in adults. Or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a child talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the child know that they must pass the information on – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the child this is a

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matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the child may think that they do not want to listen but if left until the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with children staff will:

- allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’;
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the child;
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child’s mother think about all this; (however, it is reasonable to ask questions to clarify understanding and to support a meaningful referral if that is required, e.g. when did this happen, where did this happen?)
- at an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on;
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the child what will happen next;
- let them know that someone (either you or another named person, e.g. the SL) will come to see them before the end of the day;
- report verbally to the SL;
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form Form C (Green form) and hand it to the SL; and
- seek support if they feel distressed or need to debrief.

Notifying parents

The Playgroup will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the SL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if Playgroup believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will be sought first from MASH.

Making a referral to MASH

The SL will make a referral to MASH if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

However, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 emphasises that any member of staff may make a direct referral to MASH if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child or create undue delay.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's well-being and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Manager and the SL will consider implementing early help (EHSAP) or child protection procedures.

Please also refer to issues in relation to children who are sexually harmful or abusive towards other children below.

Children with sexually harmful or inappropriate behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use Playgroup's anti-bullying procedures as above where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

Abusive behaviour by one child towards another will not be tolerated, minimised or dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

When dealing with abuse of children by other children, staff will be mindful of the potential for prejudice-based bullying; racist, disability, homophobic and transphobic abuse; gender-based violence and teenage relationship abuse. Whilst mindful of the particular vulnerability of women and girls to violence, it is also recognised that boys as well as girls can be abused by members of the opposite as well as the same gender group.

Members of staff who become concerned about a child's sexualised behaviour, including any known online sexualised behaviour, should record their concerns and report them to the SL as soon as possible, as with any other safeguarding concern.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and Playgroup will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole Playgroup community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

Any instances of sexual harm caused by one child to another and any situation where there are concerns about power imbalance, coercion or force will be discussed with MASH.

Playgroup will also be informed by the Police or Children's Social Care about referrals made directly to those agencies from other sources (e.g. family members, family friends, parents of other children) in relation to alleged sexualised inappropriate or sexually abusive behaviour displayed by children inside and/or outside Playgroup.

In all such circumstances, Playgroup may be required to attend a strategy meeting under WSCB inter-agency child protection procedures in order to facilitate risk management and planning with other agencies.

In responding to cases involving children or young people who have committed sexually abusive behaviours, Children's Social Care will consult with the Sexualised Inappropriate Behaviours Service (SIBS), for advice, consultation or provision of a direct service. A wide range of practice guidance, knowledge and therapeutic materials has been developed by SIBS to inform the interventions relating to children and young people with sexual behaviour difficulties.

In circumstances where a child displays sexualised inappropriate behaviour but evidence of sexual harm towards other children is not clear cut, Playgroup may seek consultation and advice from SIBS and/or the Designated Officer.

In deciding the most appropriate response, relevant considerations will include:

- the nature and extent of the inappropriate/abusive behaviours. In respect of sexual abuse, it is necessary to distinguish between normal childhood sexual development and experimentation; and sexually inappropriate or aggressive behaviour;
- the context of the abusive behaviours;
- the child/young person's development, family and social circumstances;
- the need for services, specifically focusing on the child/young person's harmful behaviour as well as other significant needs; and/or
- the risks to self and others, including other children in Playgroup, household, extended family, peer group and wider social network.

Playgroup is committed to participating in plans both to provide children who are at risk from other children and those children who may present a risk to other children with appropriate services to address any concerns and, wherever possible, to facilitate ongoing access to education in Playgroup for all children concerned, subject to appropriate risk assessments and risk management plans.

Youth produced sexual imagery ('sexting')

Playgroup will act in accordance with advice endorsed by DfE 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges': responding to incidents and safeguarding young people' (UK Council for Child Internet Safety 2016) -

All incidents of youth produced sexual imagery (YPSI) will be dealt with as safeguarding concerns. The primary concern at all times will be the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

Young people who share sexual imagery of themselves or their peers are breaking the law. However, as highlighted in national guidance, it is important to avoid criminalising young people unnecessarily. Playgroup will therefore work in partnership with external agencies with a view to responding proportionately to the circumstances of any incident.

All incidents of YPSI should be reported to the SL as with all other safeguarding issues and concerns. Staff will not make their own judgements about whether an issue relating to YPSI is more or less serious enough to warrant a report to the SL. What may seem like less serious concerns to individual members of staff may be more significant when considered in the light of other information known to the SL, which the member of staff may not be aware of.

If staff become concerned about a YPSI issue in relation to a device in the possession of a student (e.g. mobile phone, tablet, digital camera), the member of staff will secure the device (i.e. it should be confiscated).

Staff will not look at or print any indecent images. The confiscated device will be passed immediately to the SL (see 'Viewing the imagery' below).

The SL will discuss the concerns with appropriate staff and speak to young people involved as appropriate. Parents/carers will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.

If, at any point in the process, there is concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police via the MASH immediately.

The Police will always be informed when there is reason to believe that indecent images involve sexual acts and any child in the imagery is under 13 years of age.

The SL will make a judgement about whether a reported YPSI incident is experimental as above or aggravated.

Aggravated incidents involve criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of sexual images created by young people. These include possible adult involvement or criminal or abusive behaviour by young people such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats, malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts, or creation or sending or showing of images without the knowledge or against the will of a young person who is pictured.

Aggravated incidents of sexting will usually be referred to MASH for advice about whether or not a response by the Police and/or Children's Social Care is required.

This will facilitate consideration of whether:

- there are any offences that warrant a Police investigation
- child protection procedures need to be invoked

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- parents/carers require support in order to safeguard their children
- a multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) meeting is required
- any of the perpetrators and/or victims require additional support. This may require the initiation of a EHSAP and the offer of early help services

Examples of aggravated incidents include:

- evidence of adult involvement in acquiring, creating or disseminating indecent images of young people (possibly by an adult pretending to be a young person known to the victim)
- evidence of coercing, intimidating, bullying, threatening and/or extortion of children by one or more other children to create and share indecent images of themselves
- pressure applied to a number of children (e.g. all females in a group) to create and share indecent images of themselves
- pressurising a child who does not have the capacity to consent (e.g. due to their age, level of understanding or special educational needs) or with additional vulnerability to create and share indecent images of themselves
- dissemination of indecent images of young people to a significant number of others with an intention to cause harm or distress (possibly as an act of so-called 'revenge porn', bullying or exploitation)
- what is known about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage or are violent
- sharing of indecent images places a young person is at immediate risk of harm, for example the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming
- The SL will make a judgement about whether or not a situation in which indecent images have been shared with a small number of others in a known friendship group with no previous concerns constitutes an aggravated incident; or whether Playgroup is able to contain the situation in partnership with all parents of the children involved, arrange for the parents to ensure that all indecent images are deleted and that the young people involved learn from the incident in order to keep themselves safe in future.

In the latter instance, the SL will usually consult with the Police and/or Children's Social Care through the MASH to check that no other relevant information is held by those agencies and to ensure an agreed response is documented before proceeding.

Viewing the imagery - adults should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible, the SL's responses to incidents will be based on what they have been told about the content of the imagery.

Any decision to view imagery will be based on the SL's professional judgement. Imagery will never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to a child.

If a decision is made to view imagery, the SL will be satisfied that viewing:

- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved)

- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report
- is unavoidable because a young person has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a Playgroup device or network

If it is necessary to view the imagery then the SL will:

- never copy, print or share the imagery; this is illegal
- discuss the decision with the Manager, Children's Social Care or the Education Safeguarding Manager
- ensure viewing is undertaken by the SL or Deputy SL with delegated authority from the Manager
- ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the Manager, another SL or a member of the senior leadership team. The other staff member does not need to view the images
- wherever possible ensure viewing takes place on Playgroup premises, ideally in the Manager or SL's office
- ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery
- record the viewing of the imagery in the child's safeguarding record, including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions; and ensure this is signed and dated and meets the wider standards set out by Ofsted for recording safeguarding incidents
- deletion of images - if Playgroup has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery.

Sexual exploitation of children

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people. Victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs, alcohol and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to the trafficking of children.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation of children and all concerns are reported immediately to the SL. The SL will consider the need to make a referral to Children's Social Care via the MASH (see below) as with any other child protection concern and with particular reference to WSCB Child Sexual Exploitation procedures. Parents will be consulted and notified as above.

Following a referral to Children's Social Care, a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meeting may be convened under WSCB inter-agency safeguarding procedures. The Playgroup will attend and share information at MASE meetings as required. Parents and young people will be invited to attend MASE meetings by Children's Social Care as appropriate.

So-called 'honour based' violence

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family and/or community. Such crimes include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered HBV.

All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and staff will record and report any concerns about a child who might be at risk of HBV to the Safeguarding Lead as with any other safeguarding concern. The SL will consider the need to make a referral to the Police, and/or Children's Social Care as with any other child protection concern; and may also contact the Forced Marriage Unit for advice as necessary.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a form of child abuse. It is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons or other injury to the female genital organs. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so Playgroup staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female children about going on a long holiday.

If staff have a concern that a girl may be at risk of FGM, they will record their concern and inform the SL as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Managers are subject to a statutory duty defined by Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) to report to the Police personally where they discover (e.g. by means of a disclosure) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18. This is known as mandatory reporting.

Managers in that situation will record their concerns and inform the SL, who will support the practitioner in making a direct report to the Police.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female, and sometimes a male, does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. Playgroup staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a child about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. (See <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage> for further information)

Radicalisation and Extremism

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of Playgroup's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values.

Even very young children have been exposed, in rare circumstances, to extremism at home and elsewhere including online.

As children get older, they look for adventure and excitement and they may start to ask questions about their identity and belonging. During that stage of their development they are vulnerable to extremist groups that may claim to offer answers, identity and a social network apparently providing a sense of belonging. Many of those extremist groups make sophisticated use of the internet and social media to target young people and spread their ideology, making young people more vulnerable to being influenced by extremist ideas.

Playgroup has defined responsibilities to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in Playgroup.

During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. Playgroup is committed to preventing children from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. Playgroup promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing children with opportunities through the curriculum to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and learn how to discuss and debate points of view; and by ensuring that all children are valued and listened to within Playgroup.

Playgroup staff receive training that provides them with both the information they need to understand the risks affecting children and young people in this area; and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and how to support them. Staff are trained to report all concerns about possible radicalisation and extremism to the SL immediately as they would any other safeguarding concern.

Playgroup recognises the importance of providing a safe space for children to discuss controversial issues; as well as building their resilience and the critical thinking skills they need in order to challenge extremist perspectives. However, Playgroup will make appropriate referrals to the Police PREVENT team and Channel programme in respect of any child whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

Playgroup will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in Playgroup with a child's parents/carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk; and will also support parents/carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation.

Playgroup expects all staff, volunteers, Board Members, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire Playgroup premises to behave in accordance with the Playgroup's Code of Conduct, will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on Playgroup premises or at Playgroup events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

Parents and staff may find the website www.educateagainsthate.com informative and useful. The website is designed to equip Playgroup, staff and parents with the information, tools and resources they need to recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people and how best to support them. The website provides information on training resources.

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age. Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. When Playgroup becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement for a child that has not been notified to Children's Social Care, Playgroup will encourage parents and private foster carers to notify Children's Social Care and will share information with Children's Social Care as appropriate.

Staff reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, as emphasised in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the SL, the deputy SL, the Manager and/or the chair of the Board are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety; or
- for any other reason, they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

In any of those circumstances, staff may make direct child protection referrals and share information without being subject of censure or disciplinary action. However, staff should inform the SL and/or Manager at the earliest opportunity that they have done so unless in their judgement doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

If in any doubt, members of staff may consult the MASH (details below).

Submitting child protection referrals

All child protection referrals should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by completing a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) and submitting it to the MASH at mash@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk. The form can also be completed online.

All urgent child protection referrals, i.e. where there is an immediate concern about a child's safety should be made in the first instance by telephoning the MASH on 01926 414144. This should be followed by submission of a MARF as above.

Outside of office hours, immediate concerns about a child should be referred to the Emergency Duty Team on telephone number 01926 886922.

If staff are ever concerned that a child is in immediate danger, they will contact the Police by dialling 999.

Related policies

Safeguarding is integral to all Playgroup policies and procedures and support our practice in this area:

Children who are looked after

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. Playgroup ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe and ensures that appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The SL hold details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children who are looked after.

Advice and support

For advice and support about any safeguarding matter in Playgroup or for information about a range of safeguarding training courses, please contact:

Adrian Over
07966 224286 (if unavailable, please contact via e mail)
adrianover@warwickshire.gov.uk

Ann Seal
01926 742523
annseal@warwickshire.gov.uk

Education Safeguarding Service
Linda Fenn (Team Administrator)
01926 742525; lindafenn@warwickshire.gov.uk

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

I confirm that I have read and understand the policy.

Staff name	Signature	Date
Clare Breton		
Sarah Carroll		
Sarah Clement		
Ali Collett		
Xianna Fletcher		
Lynda Flowers		
Sally Flynn		
Tor Heard		
Marie Hill		
Carol Hooper		
Chrissie Littlecott		
Adriana Mitroi		
Anna Perry		
Ingrid Sykes-Tucker		
Board member name	Signature	Date
Anna Butcher		
Katie Castle		
Nicky McCarthy		
Tracey Rooney		
Sally Seddon		