

Policy and Procedures

Child Protection & Safeguarding

This document sets out the policies and procedures that Little Pixies Nursery operates by and gives clear guidance to parents/guardians.

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Child Protection & Safeguarding

Safeguarding Policy

Little Pixies Nursery will work with children, parents, guardians, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children.

Little Pixies Nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of Debra Lovell, (Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator) at the earliest opportunity.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator includes:

- Be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and children/young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified;
- Provide basic advice and support to all those who seek it with regard to child protection and poor practice;
- Complete the organisation's reporting and recording procedures as outlined in the policy and procedures;
- Promote safe working practice/code of conduct;
- Attend, promote and organise training;
- Promote and ensure confidentiality is maintained;
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice;
- Maintain records related to child protection and unsuitable adults, and ensure these are stored securely on the premises;
- Maintain up to date contact details for other agencies and know how to keep SSCB guidelines updated;
- Pass information to other relevant organisations /agencies as appropriate;
- Make referrals to the investigating agencies - Shropshire Council Initial Contact Team and the Police - in line with child protection procedures;
- Inform Ofsted of any allegations of abuse made against a person working in the setting, or any other abuse alleged to have taken place on the premises;
- Share information about Safeguarding Children procedures with parents prior to their child starting in the setting

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first

people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

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

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Contact telephone numbers

- Ofsted 0300 123 1231
- Safeguarding Children's Board Initial Contact Team 03456 789008
- Out of hours: Shropshire 03456 789040
- Telford and Wrekin Referral Number 01952 385700
- Out of hours - Telford and Wrekin 01952 676500
- Police Public Protection Unit 0300 333 3000

Types of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the nursery manager

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity unless this is likely to put the child at increased risk
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Initial contact team will be informed immediately by the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual abuse

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language.

This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The symptoms may also include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The disclosure will be detailed in a confidential report
- The disclosure will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- The matter will be referred to the Initial Contact Team immediately by the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- The concern will be discussed with the parent unless it is felt that this will put the child at increased risk
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may need to be completed if there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the Initial Contact Team by the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the local authority.

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent unless it is felt that this will put the child at increased risk
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- A CAF may need to be completed if there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the Initial Contact Team will be informed immediately by the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff

- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO)) of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- 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.
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Initial Contact Team and Ofsted and/or a CAF needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Initial Contact team and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

What to expect when you call the Initial Contact Team

If you have concerns about a child or young person, but are unsure whether it meets the threshold for child protection you can ring the Initial Contact Team (Tel: 0345 678 9008) and ask to speak to a qualified Social Worker for advice and guidance. You will need to keep the name and identity of the child, family or individual concerned anonymous at this stage. Give the social worker the scenario, but no specifics. The social worker will be able to tell you if you need to refer this as a child protection concern or undertake a CAF if it is considered to be a Child in Need.

A concern is a child protection issue when:

- A child is perceived to be at risk of significant harm
- A child has sustained an injury
- A disclosure has been made
- A child is likely to suffer long term adverse effects as a consequence of abuse or neglect.

If your concerns meet the threshold for child protection then you must have evidence to support your child

protection referral, so make sure that all your written documentation is to hand when you make the call. The information should include the name, date of birth and home address of the child. The Initial Contact Team requires 3 ways to verify the identity of the child, so the more information you have relating to the child and their family, the better.

The Initial Contact Team is being very rigorous and consistent in the cases it accepts as child protection referrals and those that are considered children in need.

If your concern does not meet the threshold for child protection and compulsory intervention, you will be asked to go away and complete a CAF.

A Child in Need requires parental consent to share information before any support can be put in place for the child and their family. As the professional in regular contact with the child, you will be expected to undertake a CAF within 2 working days of notifying the Initial Contact Team. Once you have been advised to do this, the ISA Co-ordinator will follow up the CAF with you within 48 hours and offer you support with the process.

Staffing and volunteering

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced CRB disclosure clearance.

All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment, and receive initial basic training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery DSCO undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) at the nursery is: Debra Lovell

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- All enhanced CRB disclosures checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- All students will have enhanced CRB disclosures conducted on them before their placement starts
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- 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 procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

- All contractors/external workers will be enhanced CRB checked and the manager will request this before allowing them access to the nursery. All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to a whistle blowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Initial Contact Team does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Initial Contact Team.

Support to families

- The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery
- The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Initial Contact Team with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Employees or volunteers of the nursery

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the HM Government guidance in 'Working together to safeguard children'.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the DSCO, owners or deputy manager instead.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the Initial Contact Team will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, Initial Contact Team) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, Initial Contact Team and asks all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- To protect both parties the member of staff under the allegation would be immediately suspended whilst the matter is fully investigated.
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice

- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery is also required to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future CRB checks and avoid any unnecessary re-investigation
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.