

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Statement of intent

Chandlers Chatters Playgroup/Preschool will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children is everyone's responsibility. The child's best interests must always be considered. Everyone who comes into contact with the child has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Procedures

We conduct the following procedures. We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

The Designated Safeguarding lead is Debbie Russell, Sharon Bond (Deputy) Sue Allen (Manager) is an extra.

- We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Candidates are informed of the need to conduct 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 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 details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- All staff must complete the annual disqualification declaration and suitable persons' update form

The Preschool is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" (HMG 2006.)

Method

Responding to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, peer on peer, radicalisations, bullying, sexual exploitation, online and cyber, truancy and FGM.

- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, member of staff makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader or manager who is acting as the 'designated person.' The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigations. This is the Duty and Referral Team at Havering – (during office hours) 01708 433222, (outside office hours) 01708 433999. This is done initially by telephone, followed by Written Report (if applicable). ALL CONCERNS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE DUTY AND REFERRAL TEAM, even if an allocated Social Worker or Family Support Worker is in place. ALL TELEPHONE CALLS, CONCERNS, VISITS MUST BE WRITTEN DOWN.

NB in some cases this may mean the police, or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The Havering Safeguarding Children Board tel. number is 01708 433528

Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

- We use the detailed procedures and reporting format contained in the London Child Protection Procedures (2010) when making a referral to children's social care or other appropriate agencies.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being: unexplained bruising, marks or signs of abuse or neglect that a member of staff:

- Listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will act.
- Does not question the child.

- Makes a written record that forms an objective record of observation or disclosure that includes:
- The date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- The names of any other persons at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the settings safeguarding file which is kept securely and confidentially.

Culture, Faith and Beliefs

The number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is small, but children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, their ability to form relationships and to their self-esteem. It is likely that a proportion of this type of abuse remains unreported.

Such abuse occurs when a carer views a child as being 'different,' attributes this difference to the child being 'possessed' or involved in 'witchcraft' and attempts to exorcise him or her.

A child could be viewed as 'different' for a variety of reasons such as disobedience, independence, bed-wetting, nightmares, illness or disability. There is often a weak bond of attachment between the carer and the child.

There are various social reasons that make a child more vulnerable to an accusation of 'possession' or 'witchcraft.' These include family stress and/or a change in the family structure.

The attempt to 'exorcise' may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing and isolation and usually occurs in the household where the child lives.

Any siblings or other children in the household may well be cared for with all their needs met by the parents and carers. The other children may have been drawn in by the adults to view the child as 'different' and may have been encouraged to participate in the adult activities.

Concerns reported in the cases known from research have involved children aged 2-14 years, both boys and girls and have been reported through schools or non-governmental organisations. The referrals usually take place at the point when the situation has escalated and become visible outside the family. This means that the child may have been subjected to serious harm for a period of time already.

The initial concerns referred have been about:

- Issues of neglect such as not being fed properly or being 'fasted,' not being clothed, washed properly etc. but left to fend for themselves especially compared to other children in the household.
- Often the carer is not the natural parent, and the family structure can be complex.
- Children often appear distressed or withdrawn.
- The child is seen as the scapegoat for a change in family circumstances for the worse.
- In a group of children, it may be the child who is powerless vis-à-vis the parents/carers, may be a child with no essential role in the family.
- The child is seen as someone who violates the family norms by being physically different perhaps because of illness, disability, or in some case, a suspicion by the father or adultery by the mother

Child abuse linked to faith or belief may occur where a child is treated as a scapegoat for perceived failure

Refugees and Trauma

Events that refugees have experienced related to war or persecution can all be called "traumatic events". It is important to note that children are very resilient and can often cope with difficult experiences and events in healthy and productive ways. Such children may not display any symptoms and may not need service providers to intervene. However, for some children, exposure to traumatic events has a profound and lasting effect on their daily functioning.

The impact of exposure to traumatic events on children may be different depending on the child's age and stage of development. There are some signs of distress as a result of exposure to traumatic events that are specific to a child's developmental stage.

Audit

Every full term all Key Person's fill in a Safeguarding Questionnaire. If there are any on-going concerns this will be reported to the Safeguarding officer who will act accordingly.

Attendance

We believe that regular attendance at Pre-school is important for children's wellbeing so if a child is absent, we.

- Contact the parent carer on the first day to see why the child has not attended.
- After two continuous sessions without notification, we will contact other emergency numbers on child's Registration Form. If this is unsuccessful, we would then contact the local authority

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

The London Safeguarding Board details procedures for making referral to the local duty and referral team. We also refer to the “Quick Referral Flowchart” (attached). This is based on ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (HMG 2006).

- We keep a copy of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- All members of staff are familiar with the Child Protection Record and follow the procedures for recording and reporting.

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 guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform the parents.

Liaison with other agencies

We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines

- We have a copy of ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority in child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy in any emergency for the setting and social services to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- Contact details for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.
- If a referral is made to the local authority social care department, we act with the area’s Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time.

Allegations against staff

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting; or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse. We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding

Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting has abused a child.

- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's LADO department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation conducted by social services in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management feel it is appropriate in the circumstances, the playgroup/preschool will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process. The target timescale for the resolution of this investigation will be as soon as possible.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed due to engaging in activities that cause concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

The playgroup/preschool is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- All staff are given yearly training to refresh their knowledge and understanding of child protection.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow 'strong,' resilient and listened to' and so that they develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

- We create within the setting a culture value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is conducted in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

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