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Child Protection

Our setting 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.

Procedures

We are committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ where children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas.

Our designated safe guarding leads are:

Laura Holmes – Manager/Director

Jo Buckland- Rooms manager

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up to date knowledge of the safeguarding issues.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. (is this definitely told to them)
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out ‘enhanced disclosure’ checks with the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect to references and DBS checks for staff, 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 with children.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - The DBS number
 - The date the DBS check was obtained
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2015) 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 a child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps, such as audio visual door entry system, to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorized person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures

Responding to suspicions of abuse:

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms- physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;
 - deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside of the setting.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that may affect or may have affected children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organise abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. Whilst this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who may access our wrap around care services.

Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.

- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with Designated Safeguarding Lead. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcomes either through the way we speak to the children or by asking questions of children.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff 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 possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child;
 - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes
 - The date and time of the observation or the disclosure,
 - The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
 - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated in the child protection folder, which is kept securely and confidentially in the office.
- The member of staff acting as the Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
- Key workers and other staff will be briefed on what to look out for, only historical information will be shared if relevant.

Making a referral

Informing parents

- Parents are usually the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child at greater danger.
- We inform parents when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If suspicion of abuse warrants referral, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, unless it is deemed that this puts the child at greater danger.
- This will usually be the case where the parents are the likely abuser; in these situations social services will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidelines
- We have a current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues.
- We notify Ofsted of any major incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications are made as soon as possible, or at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.

- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer to investigate:
01452 426994
- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that this is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care team agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the manager 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 it is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure Bureau Service (DBS) of relevant information, so that individuals that pose a threat to children (and vulnerable groups) can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. We are 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 signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Children Board.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being in sight or sound of other adults.

Curriculum

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

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Safeguarding Children's Board.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.

- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Local Children's Social Care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and their family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the child protection plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Children's Board.

Looked after Children

- Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority. Most will be in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent (s).
- We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff is committed to doing all that they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.
- We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations, physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However not all have experienced abuse and there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into care. A child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has an impact on their emotional well-being. It is not appropriate for a child under two to be placed in a day care setting in addition to a foster placement however children older than two may be.
- We place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and procedures are based on attachment and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives, as the foundation for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and enable the development of positive dispositions for learning. Young children need to be settled enough to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them to make the most of educational opportunities.
- We offer places for funded three and four year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. Children are expected to be in the setting for at least 6 months and have been settled with their foster carer prior to starting with us. If a child already attends the setting and becomes a 'looked after child' we will continue to care for them.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated child protection co-ordinator. The designated person and child's key person will liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his/her family and ensure that appropriate information is gained and shared. At the start of the placement there is professional meeting to draw up a care plan which is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months, then every three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan considers their emotional needs and how they will be met; any emotional needs and problems that affect their behaviour; their sense of self, culture and languages and identity; their need for sociability and friendship; their interests and abilities and how any special needs will be supported.
- The care plan will also consider how information will be shared; what contact the child will have with his/her birth parents; what written reporting required; where possible the involvement of the birth parents in planning and setting's activities.
- Any abuse concerns should be recorded and reported to the child's social care worker according to the safeguarding children's procedure of our setting.

Uncollected Child

In the event of a child not collected by authorised adults at the end of the session we have the following procedure in place. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child.

Procedures

- Parents of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information on their Registration form
 - Home address and telephone number
 - Place of work, address and telephone number
 - Mobile telephone number
 - Names, addresses, telephone number and signatures of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child
 - Who has parental responsibility for the child
 - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- If parents are away from home or work they must submit in writing how they can be contacted.
- If a new person is collecting the child, where possible they would be introduced to the Nursery Manager and the child's Key Person. If this is not possible a password should be provided with a description of the person collecting
- Parents must inform us as soon as possible if they are not able to pick up the children so we can begin to take back-up measures.
- We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures in the event that their children are not collected by an authorized adult within one hour of the setting closing and the staff can no longer supervise the child on the premises.
- If a child has not been collected the following procedure applies:
 - The child's file is checked for any information regarding changes to collection
 - Parents/carers are contacted at home or work
 - If unsuccessful other authorized adults are contacted to collect
 - The child does not leave the setting with any adult that is not on the Registration form or child's file
- If the child has still not been collected and the setting has closed we will begin our procedure for uncollected children
 - We will contact the local authority children's social care team
 - The child stays at the setting with two workers until the child is safely collected by the parent or social worker
 - Social care will then aim to find the parent or relative, if unsuccessful the child becomes looked after by local authority
 - Under no circumstances will staff go looking for parents nor take the child home with them
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed

Missing Child

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child goes missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Child goes missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed the key person/staff alerts the setting leader.
- The setting leader calls the police and reports the child as missing then calls the parent.
- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure all other children are present.
- Doors and gates checked to ensure no breach of security.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out where the child was last seen and records this.

- The owner carries out an investigation immediately.

Child goes missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed a child is missing, staff on the outing asks children to stand with their carer and carry out a headcount. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- Nominated person is immediately contacted and the incident recorded.
- Nominated person will contact the police and reports the child as missing.
- The parent is contacted, who makes their way to the setting.
- Staff takes the remaining children back to the setting. One member of staff stays where the child was last seen.
- An investigation is carried out by the owner.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Laura Arnold speaks with the parents.
- A full investigation is carried out taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person writes an incident report detailing; date and time, what staff and children were present, who was responsible for that child, when the child was last seen, what has happened since the child has been missing and how long the child has been missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the interest warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken Ofsted will be informed
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Keeping everyone calm is very important.
- Staff may blame themselves and the blame and fear for the child will increase depending on how long the child has been missing for.
- Staff under investigation must be fairly treated and receive support if they are feeling vulnerable.
- When dealing with distressed parents there must be two members of staff present.
- Remaining staff must not discuss incident in front of children and they must focus on the children's needs.
- Staff may need counselling and support depending on the severity of the final outcome.
- Staff must not discuss anything with the press without taking advice.

Use of mobile phone and cameras

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children from the unacceptable use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

Personal mobile phones

Personal mobile phones belonging to members of staff are not used on the premises during working hours. Mobile phones are to be placed in a basket at the start of each member of staff's shift which is kept in the staff room.

In the event of an emergency, they may be used in the office with permission from the manager.

The setting's telephone number should be given to staff's family/childcare etc. for contacting in the case of an emergency.

The setting's mobile phone will be taken out on school runs and other outings for use in emergencies only.

Staff will not use their mobile phones for taking photos of any children in the setting.

Parents and visitors are requested to not use their mobile phones whilst on the premises.

Cameras and videos

- Staff must not bring own cameras or video recorders into the setting.

- Recordings and photographs are for valid reasons only i.e. for observations or displays.
- Camera and video use is monitored by Laura Arnold.
- Photographs and recordings of children are only taken of children after written permission from parents.
- We ask parents to respect our procedure for not taking photographs and videos at special events of groups of children. Parents will have the opportunity to take a photo of their own child only at the end.