CHILD PROTECTION

&

SAFEGUARDING

POLICY

REVIEWED JULY 2018 BY
THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The safety and welfare of a child at Little Hands Little Feet Nursery is of paramount importance (Children N.I. Order 1995). In order to achieve this, Little Hands Little Feet Nursery will provide the children in its care with a safe, secure and nurturing setting. Every child is valued as an individual, is treated with dignity and respect and their right to personal privacy is respected. Every child has the right to be involved and consulted on their own intimate care to the best of their abilities and their views should be taken into account.

STAFF & PROTECTION

All staff that are in contact with all the children in the Nursery will be vetted following the procedures of Access Northern Ireland and HSC. We also understand the importance of keeping updated with new Child Protection research and ensure that staff are continually updated in this important area through appropriate training. All teaching and non-teaching staff will be given guidelines on to how to:

- Become aware of what constitutes abuse
- Identify possible signs of abuse
- Contact a member of the Designated Child Protection Team
- Follow the correct procedures
- Follow the correct procedure when an allegation has been made against a member of staff
- Promote the relationship and partnership with parents.

What constitutes abuse?

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, an acquaintance, a carer, or a stranger. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or of a failure to provide proper care.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

Neglect

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from danger, from cold or starvation. This includes the persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Injury

The actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This is where it is the main or only form of abuse.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms, for example, lack of supervision, or the use of physical restraints such as being confined to a wheelchair or bed.

Exploitation

The actual or likely intention of manipulation, ill treatment or abuse of power and control over a child for personal gain.

IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

It is preferable to prevent abuse or intervention from taking place at the earliest possible stage. Staff, students and volunteers should observe any change in appearance of a child or changes in behaviour etc. Care must be taken as there can be other causes for this – bereavement, domestic violence, drug, alcohol or solvent abuse.

Possible signs of abuse could be: -

Bruises, particularly bruises of an identifiable shape which may be made by strap, hand or object, also bite marks, cuts or burns.

Indications of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparent deficient nutrition.

Indications of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking

Indications of sexual abuse, such as inappropriate sexual behaviour, precociousness and withdrawal.
Notice should also be taken of marked deterioration in performance and / or increased absenteeism.

FOLLOWING THE CORRECT PROCEDURES

Staff should be vigilant. All concerns must be recorded and reported to the Designated Child Protection Team. Complete confidentiality must be observed and members of staff are not permitted to discuss possible signs of abuse outside the Nursery. All information is strictly shared on a need to know basis regarding any child protection issue. All staff, students and volunteers will be vetted and made fully aware of child protection procedures and issues.

Where staff sees signs, which cause them concern, they should, as a first step, seek some clarification from the child with tact and understanding. These concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Child Protection Team. Care must be taken when asking children and when interpreting their response. One must not ask leading questions which may be later interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind.

Staff should initiate the conversation by saying "Tell me what happened?" and staff should listen to the child's response without interrupting.

Staff should make detailed notes recording time, date, place, people present, actual words used by the child and any signs of physical injury, which can be sketched if necessary but never photographed. Under no circumstances should a child's clothing be fully removed and should only be moved to display the area of concern.

Staff should not give undertakings of confidentiality as it may be necessary to disclose information to other professionals if the child is to receive appropriate help.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

1.No member of staff should be totally alone with a child without being visible to another member of staff

2. If a child requires changing, one staff member may help him/her with the minimum of physical contact. The staff member concerned should always inform another staff member before beginning the changing task. With the exception of the child's parents, only staff members are to toilet children.

3. Access NI screening forms are to be completed by prospective volunteers and the applicants must be passed prior beginning work at Little hands Little feet.

4. All members of staff should ensure that their relationships with and behaviour towards the children in their care should be appropriate and beyond reproach.

5. Staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with the children in their care although this should not discourage them from providing physical comfort to a distressed child as any caring parent would do.

6. All staff are advised that physical response to misbehaviour is illegal unless it is by way of necessary restraint to avoid injury to themselves or others as per the guidelines on safe restrictive handling.

7. Where a child indicates that he/she is uncomfortable with physical contact, staff should respect their wishes, unless contact becomes necessary in order to protect the child, property or others from harm.

8. All staff must ensure that when required to administer first aid they are in full view of another member of staff

9. All visitors to the nursery must report to Management on entering the building and sign in (the sign in book is in the hallway). Other professionals working with the children will do so under staff supervision.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Should a complaint or concern about possible child abuse be made against a member of staff, contact the Gateway Team directly. Please inform the Designated Child Protection Team immediately.

LHLF Social Worker
Early Years Team 028 95 042 811

Address:

Early Years Services – The Everton Complex
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
585-587 Crumlin Road
Belfast
BT14 7GB

The member of staff will be removed from duties involving children and may be suspended from duty, pending investigation. If a complaint is made against the Designated Officer, the Deputy Officer must be informed immediately.

The Management will always seek advice from the Early Years Team if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Please see 'Reporting Procedures for Issues Surrounding Child Protection' on last page of this policy.

A written record is kept of every stage of the procedure, whether a referral is made or not.
Where a complaint is made directly against a Manager, the issue will be thoroughly investigated.
The Designated Officers must then inform (if he/she is not the subject of the complaint) who will begin to record. Advice is sought by the Manager (if he/she is not the subject of the complaint), who will make an initial assessment to establish if there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further action.

The Managers (providing neither are the subject of the complaint) will decide either that:
The allegation is apparently without substance and no further action is necessary OR an immediate referral to the Early Years Team or the Police is warranted OR the allegation concerns inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the disciplinary procedures.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

During staff's regular nursery duties, if unusual marks are found on a child, the child is exhibiting unusual sexual behaviour or discloses information to a member of staff, staff will report it to the Designated Child Protection Team and a record will be kept. Records should be clear and concise. Written records should contain the following information:

- The nature of the information
- Who gave the information
- The time, date and circumstances
- A description of signs and symptoms if possible
- If information is disclosed by the child this should be recorded
- Detail of any advice sought, from whom and when
- Decision reached as to whether case should be referred to Early Years Team
- How, when and by whom this was done
- Otherwise, reasons for not referring to Early Years Team

This information will then be signed and placed in the designated child protection log file, which is stored in the locked filing cabinet.

Should a child be presented to staff at nursery with an injury e.g. bruising on the face or a broken limb, a record will also be made and parents will be informed. If the injury causes concern the above procedure will be followed.

If a child is presented to the Designated Child Protection Team with physical marks which the parents classify as a medical condition, Little hands Little feet must be presented with a medical letter stating the medical condition and the GP's contact information. A member of the Designated Child Protection Team may seek consent to contact the child's GP.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT LITTLE HANDS LITTLE FEET LTD

Should you have any concerns, please contact out Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Mrs Louise Belshaw - Designated Officer 07739 322452

Ms Jane Corbett - Designated Officer 07762 899861

Mrs Isla Patterson - Designated Officer 07856 256616

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Little hands Little feet endeavours to best protect, care for, educate and safeguard all children in our care. We work closely with our contracted agent HSP (Health and Safety Professionals). This helps to ensure staff, parents, visitors and children's health and safety needs are being met. Risk assessments are carried out regularly; COSHH assessments are carried out on a yearly basis and when a new appliance is introduced to the setting. Policies are up-dated, reviewed, assessed and evaluated regularly. Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly inspection of all toys, fire appliances (including fire doors, fire extinguishers, lights, escape routes), other electrical appliances, interior features, exterior features, indoor play areas and outdoor play areas are carried out. This is to safeguard children and adults from any unnecessary and preventable incident or accident.

With the help of HSP, Little hands Little feet have developed a bespoke Health and Safety file with focus on the following key areas;

- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Management Tool Kit
- Fire Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Monthly Health & Safety Checklist
- COSHH
- Manual Handling
- Expectant Mothers, DSE Users, Lone Working Young Persons
- Arrangements for Sub-Contractors
- Permit to Work Policy
- Accident Investigation Forms
- Driver Information
- Step Ladder Inspection Forms
- Foot Stool Inspection Forms
- Water Temperature Records

- Toy Inspection Records

We aim to safeguard all children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of children's health or development, ensure children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and actively taking action to enable all children to have the best outcome in their early years.
Measures are in place to safeguard children's privacy by implementing a confidentiality policy, a social networking & ICT policy and a mobile phone policy.

Reporting Procedures for Issues Surrounding Child Protection

The following procedures are in place for dealing with concerns raised by Staff or Volunteers.

Staff or Volunteer has Child Protection Concerns relating
to Sexual, Physical, Emotional, Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

Record and Report to a member of the Designated Child Protection Team
Louise Belshaw - 07739322452
Jane Corbett – 07762899861
Isla Patterson - 07856 256616

If concerned, please report to
Gateway Team Belfast Trust - 028 9050 7000

Regional Emergency Social Work Service - 028 9504 9999

Little hands Little feet Social Worker - 028 9504 2811

Early Years Team - 028 9060 4208