

## **LITTLE ACORNS PRE-SCHOOL**

### **POLICY STATEMENT - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**This policy must be read in conjunction with the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Code of Practice – THE RED MANUAL. This document can be accessed via the LSCB website; [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb)**

#### **Purpose and Aims**

The purpose of Little Acorns Pre-School Safeguarding Policy is to provide a secure framework for the Pre-School in safeguarding and promoting those children who attend our Pre-School. The policy aims to ensure that:

- ◆ All children are safe and protected from harm
- ◆ Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children to feel safe and adopt safe practices
- ◆ Staff, children, committee members, visitors, volunteers and parents are aware of the expected behaviours' and the Pre-School legal responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our children

The Senior Designated Person (SDP) is: Claire Collett

If they are not available then our SDP alternate is: John Kilcoyne

Mrs Dixon, as Manager of the Pre-School, has received whole school basic safeguarding and safer recruitment training and will complete the 2-day safeguarding training.

Chairperson, Becky Hall, is Little Acorns Pre-School nominated committee member.

#### **Background information**

All those working in children's services share an objective to safeguard children and young people. All staff have a pastoral responsibility towards their children. They can play a part in the prevention of abuse and neglect, through their own policies and procedures for safeguarding children, and through the curriculum. All staff should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people, and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns. Children can be helped to understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour towards them, and taught about staying safe from harm, and how to speak up if they have worries or concerns. The curriculum can also play a

preventive role in preparing children and young people for their future responsibilities as adults, parents and citizens.

*'Through their day to day contact with children, and direct work with families, education staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, at an early stage. They should refer those concerns to the appropriate organisation, normally LA children's social care, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, to ongoing action to meet those needs. When a child has special educational needs or is disabled, Pre-School will have important information about the child's level of understanding and the most effective means of communicating with the child. They will also be well placed to give a view on the impact of treatment or intervention on the child's care or behaviour.'* (Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2006)

Section 175 of the Education Act (2002) states:

- (1) A local education authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that the functions conferred on them in their capacity as a local education authority are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

If there are welfare concerns for children or young people with additional needs that involve more than one other agency, the customer service centre (CSC) should be contacted to see if a SAF (Single Assessment Form) assessment is open. The TAC team will advise on appropriate next steps. SAF is an early intervention tool. No child or young person should be subject to SAF and child protection or child in need process at the same time. One must cease when the other takes over.

**No one who is involved in any way with the care of children can escape responsibility for identifying the signs of child abuse and, having done so, for taking appropriate action as outlined below.** Accordingly, all staff should familiarise themselves with the procedure outlined in this document as well as with the Code of Practice, which provides definitions of the types of child abuse and gives social and medical indicators of abuse/neglect.

The **Senior Designated Person** acts as the focal point for all matters concerning safeguarding children and young people. One of the primary tasks is to act as the contact between pre-school, the family and other agencies.

Incidents of possible child abuse obviously need to be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality consistent with the multi-disciplinary approach. If there is any cause for concern whatsoever it is vital that information is passed to the **designated person** immediately. In the event, following statutory investigation,

of concerns proving to be unfounded, staff should not reproach themselves for having raised the issue. In cases of this nature it is always better to be safe than sorry.

## **THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE ADHERED TO**

### **The Pre-School will:**

- ensure that it has a **designated person** who has undertaken the LSCB's 4-Day Safeguarding Children and Young People Course and attends a refresher course every 2 years thereafter.
- ensure that every member of staff and every committee member knows the name of the **designated person** and his/her role
- that they have individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales set out in the Code of Practice
- where the LSCB Code of Practice is located and other supporting documents
- ensure that members of staff and volunteers receive training on signs and symptoms of abuse every 3 years and know how to respond appropriately to a child who may disclose abuse
- ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the Pre-School and staff for safeguarding children and young people and have access to the Pre-School's Safeguarding Policy
- ensure that safe recruitment practices are adopted which help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. (Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2006)
- ensure that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively

### **The Committee will:**

- ensure that the Pre-School reviews its Safeguarding Policy annually
- ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding children and young people arrangements are brought to the attention of the committee and are remedied without delay
- ensure that the committee chair is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or partner agencies, as appropriate, in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

### **Child needing immediate medical treatment:**

If a child comes to pre-school in need of immediate medical treatment they should initially be taken to the school's designated first-aider, where appropriate action will be taken. This may involve:

- A call or delivery to the local health centre
- Delivery to hospital
- Call to emergency services

If in the judgement of the **designated person**, there are indications that the cause of the problem may be related to child abuse, the medical professionals must be informed. The **designated person** must refer the case to Social Care (see procedures below). Provision of medical treatment should not be delayed by attempts to contact the parent or guardian in advance and in some cases of suspected child abuse it would be inappropriate to alert parents (see below).

### **Child about whom there is a suspicion of possible abuse but no need for immediate medical treatment:**

- If it is believed that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, even in the absence of any physical evidence, this should be brought to the attention of the statutory child protection services immediately
- The **designated person** should make a referral to Social Care via the Children's Services Customer Service Centre on 01522 782111
- It is good practice for professionals to discuss any concerns they have with the family and, where possible, to seek the family's agreement to making a referral to Social Care. Full details of any

such conversation should be recorded. However there are exceptional circumstances where such discussion and agreement-seeking would place the child at increased risk of significant harm. In these circumstances it can be appropriate to refer without agreement from the family, although Social Care will subsequently disclose the source of the referral to the family. In cases where a professional is acting in good faith on third party information it may not be appropriate for Social Care to reveal the source of the referral. In either event Social Care will advise the professional of their decision on this point

- Other factors relevant to the decision to refer without prior discussion with the family include:
  - Issues of staff safety
  - The risk of destroying evidence
  - The likelihood of children or other family members being intimidated
  - The possibility of an increased risk of domestic violence
  - The possibility of the family moving to avoid professional scrutiny
- Staff must not themselves take any further action although if a parent, guardian or other individual volunteers information this should be recorded and passed on.
- On referral to Social Care the **designated person** needs to be clear about:
  - The nature of the concerns
  - How and why they have arisen
  - What appear to be the needs of the child and family, including any special needs arising from cultural, physical, psychological, medical or other factors
  - If known, what other agencies and professionals are involved with the child and family
  - His/her expectations of Social Care

- The action to be taken by Social Care upon receipt of the referral
- The action to be taken, and by whom, if any agreed plan is not carried out

**All verbal communications should be confirmed in writing, using the SAF (Single Assessment Form) Form, within 24 hours.**

All records are kept separately and securely from the child's main records with restricted access.

Team Around the Child (TAC) and the Single Assessment Form (SAF) can be accessed on [www.lincolnshirechildren.net](http://www.lincolnshirechildren.net)

**Additional requirements:**

- The **designated person** should keep records of any signs of abuse, neglect or any other injury and of any action taken which are timed, dated and signed. He/she should record the circumstances which caused the concern and indicate any visible injuries by way of a description and rough sketch – no photograph should be taken except by the police and/or Social care if appropriate. Any explanation or comments made by the child or their carer should be recorded in their exact words if possible. It should also be recorded whether or not the family have been informed of the reasons for the concern and the actions taken by the **designated person**.

**It is not the responsibility of Pre-School staff to investigate suspicions of child abuse but to pass on all relevant information to Social Care via the Customer Service Centre (CSC). Any investigations conducted by the Pre-School are potentially detrimental to the formal investigative process and ultimately to the safety of the child in question.**

- Where others, such as Education Welfare Officers, Youth Workers or Educational Psychologists are involved, the **designated person** should check with them to see if they have any concerns. Their comments should be noted and passed on with the referral to Social Care. The designated person can also check whether the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan by contacting the Child Protection and reviewing Unit on 01522 554061. This action does not constitute a referral.
- Following a Child Protection Investigation where the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of harm, Social Care may convene a Child Protection Conference. It is expected that the **designated person** will attend and provide a written report. If they

are unable to attend for unavoidable reasons, or send a representative, they should submit the written report in the format provided by the LA (contact the Child Protection team for details, contact information at the end of this chapter.) **It is essential that the Pre-School are represented at conference, and any subsequent Core Group Meetings and that they actively participate in any Child Protection Plan for children on their Pre-School roll.**

- If, following an Initial Investigation, concerns are substantiated but the child is not judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm, Social Care may decide that a plan for the child's future safety and welfare can be implemented without the need to convene a Child Protection Conference. If the **designated person** still has serious concerns that a child may not otherwise be adequately safeguarded he/she can request that Social Care convene a Child Protection Conference. Any such request needs to seek the support of Education's Senior Liaison Officer (see below).
- Section C of the Code of Practice describes more fully Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and Reviews.
- Pre-School should have in place a contingency plan should the designated person be unavailable. In any event reporting suspicion of child abuse should not be delayed.

Where any member of staff becomes aware of Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example

- Staff that have behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Staff that have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Staff that have failed to execute their duty to safeguard a child/ren at the setting or elsewhere
- Staff that have behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.
- inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images,

Child Protection Procedures **must** be followed. The Chair /Mrs Collett must be notified or, where the allegation is against the Mrs Collett, the Chair of Committee must be informed. **All allegations of alleged or suspected abuse must be reported to Anne Faulkner, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01522 554668**

- **Ruth Fox, Assistant Safeguarding Children Officer: 01522 554695**

This applies even where the nature of the alleged assault would not normally meet the threshold applied to children in their own families. For example, a report of a child being smacked by a parent, with no injury caused, would be unlikely to require any response by Police or Social Care. However, a similar report of a child being smacked by a member of staff should be responded to because of:

- **The vulnerability of children away from home**
- **The higher standards of conduct demanded by law and regulation of those caring for other people's children**
- **The position of trust enjoyed by such people**

Full details of how to respond to an allegation made against a member of staff can be found in the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Code of Practice and in 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2006', published DFSCF, formally DfES.

**All allegations against members of staff or volunteers in school should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and advice followed (see below).**

**Ofsted must also be notified of any allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as reasonably practical, but at the latest, within 14 days of the allegations being made.**

- Advice on any aspect of Child Protection can be sought from the Child Protection Team:
- Anne Faulkner, Child Protection Officer 01522 554687
- Ruth Fox, Assistant Child Protection Officer 01522 554689

Where a member of staff leaves our employment during an investigation or is dismissed as a consequence of an allegation being upheld a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Referral guidance and form:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/services/dbs-referrals/>

## **Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse.**

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. For our pre-school it includes such things as child safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, educational visits, intimate care, children missing education and internet safety etc. The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging affect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child. Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Also recognising and responding to inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example: inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list.

### **Physical Abuse**

This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness. This was previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse is where a child's need for love, security, recognition and praise is not met. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else such as in Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse. A parent, carer or authority figure is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having social contact with others or if inappropriate expectations are placed upon them. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- ◆ Excessively clingy or attention seeking.
- ◆ Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism.
- ◆ Withdrawn behavior or fearfulness.

- ◆Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers;too eager to please.
- ◆Eating disorders or self-harm

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact penetrative and non- penetrative, or viewing pornographic material including through the use of the internet and mobile phones. Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations or disclosures, genital soreness, injuries or disclosure, sexually transmitted diseases, inappropriate sexualized behavior including words, play or drawing.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which can significantly harm their health and development. Neglect can include inadequate supervision (being left alone for long periods of time), lack of stimulation, social contact or education, lack of appropriate food, shelter, appropriate clothing for conditions and medical attention and treatment when necessary.

### **What to do if you are concerned.**

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- ◆Do stay calm and listen carefully.
- ◆Do reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- ◆Do not investigate or ask leading questions
- ◆Do let them know that you will need to tell someone else
- ◆Do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret
- ◆Do inform your Senior Designated Person as soon as possible
- ◆Do make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident, which you must sign, date and record your position
- ◆Do not include your opinion without stating it is your opinion

◆Do refer without delay. If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the Chair/Mrs Collett in line with pre-schools Whistle blowing policy. Where those concerns relates to Mrs Collett however, this should be reported to the Chair of Committee members using the Pre-School' Whistle blowing policy.

◆ Ofsted must also be notified of any allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as reseasonably practical, but at the latest, within 14 days of the allegations being made.

### **Managing Allegations**

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young people whilst in our school. Allegations can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults and are made for a variety of reasons. If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff or volunteers this should be brought to the immediate attention of the SDP. In the case of the allegation being made against the SDP this will be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair of Committee members and the Area Education Manager. The SDP/Chair of Committee members must discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the nature of the allegations in order for the appropriate action to be taken.

◆Refer to the LADO immediately and follow up in writing within 48 hours. Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser

◆Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO

◆Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation

◆Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary

◆Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting or evaluation meeting

◆Advise the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations being founded.

## **Current Safeguarding Issues**

### **Forced Marriage**

Little Acorns Pre-School does not support the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent and will follow SCB procedures to refer any child and young person immediately to Children's social care.

### **Honour Based Violence**

Honour based violence' is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. It is important to be alert to signs of distress and indications such as self-harm, absence from Pre-School and truancy, infections resulting from female genital mutilation, isolation from peers, being monitored by family, not participating in Pre-School activities, unreasonable restrictions at home or forced marriage. Where it is suspected that a child/young person is at risk form Honour based violence Little Acorns Pre-School will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

### **Trafficked Children**

Child trafficking involves moving children across or within national or international borders for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes children being used for sex work, domestic work, restaurant/ sweatshop, drug dealing, shoplifting and benefit fraud. Where Little Acorns Pre-School is made aware of a child who is suspected of or actually being trafficked /exploited we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

This is against the law yet for some communities it is considered a religious act and cultural requirement. It is illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised. If any of the above areas of concern is brought to the attention of Little Acorns Pre-School we will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

### **Ritualistic Abuse**

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be considered is the use of any physical or psychological violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is abusive and will result in the criminal conviction of those using this form of abuse even if the intention is to help the child.

## **Children Missing Education**

“Basic to safeguarding children is to ensure their attendance at school.” (OFSTED 2002). Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their well-being. At Little Acorns Pre-School we will encourage the full attendance of all of our children at Pre-School. Where we have concerns that a child is missing education because of suspected abuse, we will report to Children Social Care to effectively manage the risks and to prevent abuse from taking place.

## **Sexually Active under Eighteen years old**

It is acknowledged by those working with young people that most young people under the age of 18 will have an interest in sex and sexual relationships. The Protocol for Sexually Active Young People under 18 years old has been designed to assist those working with children and young people to identify where these relationships may be abusive, and the children and young people may need the provision of protection or additional services. At Little Acorns Pre-School we will ensure our policy for managing this issue links to the available protocol.

## **Safeguarding Disabled Children**

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes as non-disabled children.

Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks and ‘created vulnerability’ as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment (Safeguarding Children, DCSF, July 2009). Little Acorns Pre-School will ensure that our disabled children are listened too and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse. In order to do this we will ensure that our staff and volunteers receive the relevant training to raise awareness and have access to specialist staff in the event they have concerns regarding abuse of a child.

## **Safer Recruitment and Selection**

It is a requirement for all agencies to ensure that all staff recruited to work with children and young people are properly selected and checked. At Little Acorns Pre-School we will ensure that we have a member on every recruitment panel who has received the appropriate recruitment and selection training. That all of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history and checks to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance with the Key Safeguarding Employment Standards.

## **Staff Taking Medication/Other Substances**

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If a member of staff is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children they should seek medical advice. The Chair /Mrs Collett must ensure that the member of staff only works directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. Staff medication on the premises must be securely stored, and out of reach of children, at all times.

## **Domestic Abuse**

The Government defines domestic abuse as "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality"

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic violence. Domestic abuse is likely to have a damaging effect on the health, development and welfare of children, and it will often be appropriate for such children to be regarded as Children in Need under the Children Act 1989.

Where there is evidence of domestic violence, Little Acorns Pre-School will report our concerns to the appropriate agency including children's social care and the police in order to prevent the likelihood of any further abuse taking place.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare. A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- ◆ A parent
- ◆ A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility
- ◆ A close relative
- ◆ A Local Authority for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Little Acorns Pre-School to inform the Local Authority where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements

## **Child Exploitation and E-Safety**

Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. In order to minimize the risks to our children and young people, Little Acorns Pre-School will ensure that we have in place appropriate measures such as security filtering, acceptable use policy linked to our E-Safety policy, social networking policy and a mobile phone and use of children's photographs policy. We will ensure that staff are aware of how not to compromise their position of trust in or outside of the pre-school and are aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites. Our policies clearly state that mobile phone or electronic communications with a child at our pre-school is not acceptable other than for approved Pre-School business e.g. coursework, profiles, displays. Where it is suspected that a child is at risk from internet abuse or cyber bullying we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

### **See Appendix 1 for the Mobile Phone and Camera Policy**

The above list is not exhaustive and as new policy guidance and legislation develops within the remit of Safeguarding we will review and update our policy as appropriate and in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Authority to ensure Little Acorns Pre-School is a safe place to learn and work.

Signed .....

Mrs Hall  
Chairperson of Pre-School

Date.....

Signed .....

Mrs Collett

Date.....

## Appendix 1

### LITTLE ACORNS PRE-SCHOOL

#### MOBILE PHONES POLICY AND USE OF CHILDREN'S PHOTOGRAPHS

Pre-School staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones whilst on duty, and if they need to use them in their break time, they must take calls outside of the pre- school room.

On some occasions e.g. for pre-school trips, staff will be required to carry a mobile phone, but this will only be used to make and receive pre-school phone calls. Staff should be aware that when on outings, or in pre-school, they must not use the mobile phone to take personal photos of children.

It is the policy of Little Acorns Pre-School to use ordinary cameras to take pictures of the children within our care as part of our normal pre-school life e.g. photos of the children will be used on the website or used as part of our displays.

Mobile phones and Cameras will not be used within the toilet / nappy changing areas.

This policy clarifies exactly how we will and will not use photographs of the children:

#### **We will use photographs:**

To record children's progress and inform key worker observations. To record events and outings that the children participate in. For display purposes. To include in our Pre-School albums. Parental permission will be obtained.

As evidence of the activities and outings we provide and to show Ofsted during an inspection.

**We will not take photographs:** Which will be published on the internet other than as part of our school website.

**We will not send photos of children via mobile phones.**