

St Jude's Church Nursery

14. Safeguarding - Policies and Procedures

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for children at St Jude's Church Nursery is Tash Whittle. This person has suitable experience, training and expertise, and will be responsible for liaising with social services, the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Early Years Department and Ofsted in any child protection matter. In her absence the deputy, Helen Campbell will act as the DSL or the Office Manager Mandy Bingham.

Contact numbers: Ofsted – 0300 123 1231

Social Services Joint Action Team 0845 671 0271/02392688793

Early Years: 02392 688833

LADO - Lydia Bowles 02392 882500 lado@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

We comply with the procedures approved by the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership. Systems are in place to monitor and quality assure implementation and compliance of child protection and safeguarding requirement. When a professional working in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth or Southampton (HIPS) assesses that a child/family requires additional support, they need to complete an inter-agency referral or contact form as per local processes and share this with the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The use of the Threshold Guidance will assist this process and help inform the practitioner's decision making.

We intend to create in our Nursery an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. In order to achieve this we will:

Exclude known abusers

- 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.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 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.
- Previous employment history and any discrepancies will be queried before offering the post.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. References are followed up to confirm authenticity.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised, and ideally will have a DBS check and references. If a volunteer or student works for more than 3 days within a 30 day period, the Nursery must complete an enhanced DBS check for that person.

- 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 the 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.

Seek and supply training

- We seek out regular 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. This includes topics such as female genital mutilation and cutting (FGMC), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and radicalisation (Prevent) training. Specific training will be provided where children with communication difficulties are vulnerable.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Prevent abuse by means of good practice

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 visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our setting to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of 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 carried out in a way that is developmentally 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 Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- Relevant staff are trained in and aware of the service offered by the Early Help and Prevention Service and when to refer to them in order to prevent problems getting worse.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, 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 the 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 the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Procedure should there be concerns about a child's welfare

- 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 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.
- 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, safeguarding children from the threat of terrorism 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 organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or maybe victims of child trafficking. There is also the potential for them to be drawn into terrorist activity. While 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 we may come into contact with.

- Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedure 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 the setting leader or manager who is acting as the designated safeguard lead. 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 investigation.

NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young persons' refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

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 gives 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 date and time; and
 - the names of any other person present at the time.

- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.
- Where the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by them.

Making a referral to the local authority social care team

- The DSL will first contact the Multi Advisory Safeguarding Hub (MASH) located at the City Council for advice if the child is not already known to social care. If the child is already open to social care then the child's social worker would be contacted.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents where 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 a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the social workers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns. A leaflet is displayed for parents giving contact details if they are worried a child is being abused.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on 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 or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

- If the child is already subject to a child protection order the Manager/DSL will ensure that the requirements of the order are known by all staff interacting with the child. Regular notes will be made updating information about the child and any lapses in attendance noted. Pre-existing injuries will be noted and monitored by staff. Information will be communicated to the Social Care Worker in charge of the child's case as is felt necessary by the Manager/DSL. The Manager/DSL will see and sign all notes made about concerns about the child.

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 follow the guidance of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, 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 social care department and LADO to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care and the LADO in conjunction with the police.
- Where the nursery management committee, LADO and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson 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 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 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.

Child Abuse – Possible Indicators.

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate / knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age.
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases.
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia.
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging.
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys.
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating.
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or childminder.
- Starting to wet again.
- Day or nightmares.
- Become worried about clothing being removed.
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures.
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns.
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries.
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather.
- Refusal to undress for gym.
- Bald patches.
- Continual running away.
- Fear of medical help or examination.
- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Aggression towards others.
- Fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched.
- Admitting that they are physically punished.
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted.

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental lags.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.').
- Overreaction to mistakes.
- Extreme fear of any new situation.
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this').
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation).
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

Neglect

- Constant hunger.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Constant tiredness.
- Poor state of clothing.
- Emaciation.
- Untreated medical problems.
- No social relationships.
- Compulsive scavenging.
- Destructive tendencies.

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse.

It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

Suspected Abuse

If you suspect that a child is being abused, seek advice from the police or social services. It is preferable that you identify yourself and give details. Knowing how damaging abuse is to children, it is up to the adults around to take responsibility for stopping it.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Nursery held on 21st September 2004 and is reviewed annually.

Reviewed: August 2026 Next review: July 2027