

1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Our setting 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.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Key commitment 1

St. Mary's Playgroup is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:
Sally Hayman

- Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is:
Becca Shaw

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of 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.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed (DBS).
- 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 of references and 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.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the DBS reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained;
 - details of who obtained it.
- 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 (2006) 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 (name, date, reason for visit and time in and out).
- 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.
- 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 obtain parent permission for photo's of the children to be placed on our Website

Key commitment 2

St Marys Playgroup 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're worried a child is being abused' ([Working together to safeguard children 2015](#))

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms
 - neglect
 - physical abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
 - racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
 - gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
 - radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
 - child sexual exploitation and trafficking
 - the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example sexting
 - teenage relationship abuse
 - substance misuse
 - issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
 - domestic violence

- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

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 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 organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. 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 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 the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated senior person' (DSP). The information is stored on the child's personal file.
 - We follow the CCP (2015) and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
 - 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 person's 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 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 and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the 'designated senior person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
- Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- We follow procedures based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' ([Working together to safeguard children 2015](#))
- We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board.

When you have a concern about a child:

- report it to the Social Care Children and Families Helpdesk on 01452 426565 during office hours
(Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm)
- If you have concerns about the immediate safety of the child or you believe a serious criminal offence has been committed

Contact information

- Social Services Children and Families Helpdesk: 01452 426565
- Safeguarding Children Service Telephone Number (to log child welfare concerns/ child protection register): 01452 58 3636
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board office: 01452 58 3638

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 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 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have the 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 they need to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding 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 children's social care 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 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 to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

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 Local Safeguarding Children 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 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 Designated Officer (LADO). We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as 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 in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chair/director/owner 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.

Key commitment 3

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout regular training and learning programmes for staff. We are committed to empowering young children, through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, respected, 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 all staff receive training (3 years at least) in accordance with that recommended by the Local 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 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 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 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 Local Safeguarding Children 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 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Female Genital mutilation Act 2003
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Education Act 2011
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)

- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Apprenticeships, skills Children's and learning Act 2009

(NSPCC)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children ([Working together to safeguard children 2015](#))
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused ([Working together to safeguard children 2015](#))
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: (CAF)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	St Marys Playgroup	
Held on	September 2016	(date)05/09/16
Date to be reviewed	March 2017	(date)
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Sally Hayman	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Manager	