



Summary of Policy – Safeguarding

Safeguarding Children; Acorns' highest priority is to protect children from harm and ensure their safety and wellbeing. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and it is at the heart of everything we do.

How we keep children safe;

Our Designated Lead Practitioner (DSL) is Catherine Kaiser (07952 963186) and Deputy Designated Lead Practitioner (DDSL) is Sandra Matthews (07952 963186). Any concerns should be reported to the DSL or DDSL

- The setting promotes a culture of professional curiosity and recognises that any child could become the victim of abuse.
- All staff have formal training in safeguarding and know how to identify the signs of abuse and neglect. They all know how to report this and who they report to. Additional training is provided at half termly staff meetings.
- Staff are expected to have a professional curiosity and to get to know children and families well so that they can be alert to any concerns or changes, and support children and families effectively.
- We work with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership and follow their procedures and guidelines.
- We promote children's confidence and resilience by encouraging them to have the confidence to talk to adults about anything which is worrying them. We promote a culture of listening and attention, so that children feel safe and know they will be listened to and their worries acted on.

Recognising and acting on allegations of abuse;

 There are four main types of abuse;

physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect. There are also a wide range of other harms which may adversely affect children, some examples are; Being in a home where there is domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, trafficking, substance misuse and addiction, radicalisation, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, cuckooing, modern slavery, factitious disorder, online abuse, and the exploitation of vulnerable people. This list is by no means exhaustive, and children can be vulnerable to many harms.

In any case of alleged or suspected harm, the DSL should be informed, and we would make a referral to NYSP, social services or the police, as appropriate, and we would follow advice given.

Sometimes a child may make a disclosure to a familiar adult at Acorns. We would record this and contact their parents. In this case, a referral to NYSP would be made and advice taken.

Referrals should be made to North Yorkshire Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) on 0300 131 2131. In the case of Whistleblowing or allegations against a member of staff, the **Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted on 01609 534974 or 07715 540723.**

Safer recruitment;

 Positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- Enhanced DBS checks are completed for all staff and volunteers prior to employment offer.
- At least one member of every interview panel has up-to-date Safer Recruitment Training.
- Staff must disclose any convictions, cautions, or court orders that may affect their suitability.
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if any person is dismissed or resigns due to child protection concerns.
- All staff are on the DBS update service and sign an annual declaration of suitability.

Safe conduct of staff;

- Staff mobile phones are switched off and stored in our lockable cupboard during session.
- Photographs of children are only taken in compliance with our Tapestry Policy, and on the setting's digital camera. Our online and ICT policies provide guidance for this.
- Our online policy promotes safe use of ICT and we promote awareness of online safety for children.
- We encourage all staff to be aware of keeping themselves and children safe by ensuring that children are always within sight or hearing and that they are never alone with children.
- Procedures are in place for the intimate care of children so that these can be carried out safely.



Reporting and Recording Absences;

- A daily record is kept in the register of children who are absent and reasons recorded. If we are not contacted by 9.30, we will contact parents to check in with them. This is important for safeguarding purposes and allows us to confirm children's safety and wellbeing.
- Any concerns, particularly where children are already known to social care, or are considered vulnerable, will be followed up.
- We also ask that parents drop children off as near to 8.45 as possible.
- We ask that we are provided with at least two emergency contacts, who we can use if we need to follow up a child's unexpected absence.

Confidentiality;

- We keep all records and information given to use by families, safe at Acorns. All private information is considered confidential and only shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Registration forms are kept securely in our locked cupboard.
- We comply with GDPR Legislation, to keep online information securely.

When information is shared;

- Information may be shared when children move to other settings or school.
- We also sometimes share information with other professionals such as speech therapists. This would only be done with parents' consent.
- In the case of the potential of harm to a child, we may contact social services without first contacting parents if this could risk further harm to the child, family or Acorns staff.

Uncollected children;

- We understand that parents are sometimes inadvertently held up by unforeseen circumstances. However, we ask that we are contacted as soon as possible to let us know if this is the case, and an emergency contact would be asked to collect the child.
- If a child remains uncollected by one hour after the end of Acorns day (4.15pm), and we have not been able to contact their parents or emergency contacts, we will inform social services and follow their advice.
- Two members of staff will stay with the child until they are collected.

Safety and Security of children at Acorns and Missing children;

- A clear set of procedures are in place in the very unlikely event of a child going missing whilst at Acorns, or on an outing.
- Acorns is a very secure setting as we keep our surrounded by a high fence and padlocked gates during the day. There are minimal times when the gate is opened during the day, for example if a child arrives late, and these are fully supervised by an adult who operates the padlock and gate.
- At home time, children are encouraged to stay on the 'circle time' side of our room divider, which means they could not leave unnoticed. At drop-off, they are welcomed as they come in and supported to settle in.
- When children come in from playing, the outside is checked for anyone left behind. Inside, the door to the school has a double handle, and the top one cannot be reached by children.

Complaints;

- We have a policy which sets out our Complaints procedure, and this can be accessed separately on our website.
- In summary, we aim to resolve all complaints amicably and use them as a means to improve our practice or systems. If a complaint can't be easily resolved, there is a step-by-step procedure to follow in the even of a written complaint, which is set out in the policy. In the event of a complaint, we would ask that the key person is the first person notified, this could then be escalated to one of the managers. Our aim is to keep our



children and families happy and safe, and we always try to act in their best interests. Anyone can contact Ofsted to make a complaint on 0300 123 1231.

Internet safety, including the use of cameras, mobile phones, electronic devices Social Networking;

- We use the internet at Acorns for learning and development e.g. Neli sessions, dancing, and occasionally yoga, mindfulness and stories. Our internet is filtered by North Yorkshire Schools so that unsuitable sites cannot be accessed. Despite this, staff are vigilant and ensure that any internet content is safe before using it with children.
- We do not allow children to use the internet unsupervised.
- At an age-appropriate level, we encourage children to be aware of online dangers and we provide advice for safe ICT use to parents via our newsletters.
- Children under the age of five should have very limited screen time. In view of this, we only use screens for high quality interactive learning, supervised by an adult, or for exercise, for short periods.
- As shown under 'safeguarding', we are clear about how photographs are taken and used. The tablet is used to provide daily 'Tapestry' updates. The camera is used for children's individual learning journals, or for displays.
- Personal mobile phones are not used in the setting and are stored away. The Acorns phone is not used for photographs. The only exception to this would be if a parent was worried about a child and wanted a photograph to be forwarded on 'Messenger' for reassurance.
- Acorns has a Facebook page. This is used for making posts for parents to provide information. No photographs are posted on our Facebook page.
- Photographs are used on our website. These are carefully taken to ensure that children cannot be identified or manipulated by AI.

Prevent Duty;

- All staff have had Prevent Duty training and are aware of their responsibilities to report any concerns and be alert to evidence of radicalisation.
- Home visits are carried out which help us to gain an understanding of children's home lives.
- We have a high proportion of children who are EAL or who have moved to the UK recently. We celebrate diversity and try to get to know our families well and help them to feel welcomed and valued.
- We are alert to our more vulnerable families and aim to effectively support and safeguard them, maintaining a professional curiosity.

Summary;

- This document has been written to sum up and simplify our 14 safeguarding policies. The full set of policies can be emailed by request. We hope that this summary provides a good overall synopsis of our safeguarding policy, operational guidance and overall culture to promote children's safety and wellbeing at Acorns, and to support families.
- If you are unsure of any aspect, or require clarification, please contact our Designated Lead Practitioner Catherine Kaiser, or Deputy Designated Lead Sandra Matthews, who will be happy to explain further.

For further information, please see our website www.acornsplaygroup.co.uk, email on acornsplaygroup@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 07952 963186.

If you have any concerns that a child may be in danger, or if you need to report abuse, please contact www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/

We aim to have open, transparent and non-judgemental partnerships with parents and carers. You can always speak to Catherine or Sandra in confidence about any concerns.

Catherine Kaiser DSL, Sandra Matthews DDSL

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