



WWW.URCPRESCHOOL.COM
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL - PRESCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

Safeguarding Children Policy

The URC is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its children. We intend to create in our Pre-School an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

Staff and volunteers

Our designated members of staff who co-ordinates child protection issues are:

Mrs L Robinson & Mrs Sarah Arnott

Our designated Church Elder is:

Bronwen Davis

Hertfordshire's Children's Services (0300 123 4043)

Comprehensive details can be found on the pre-school notice board, which is in the lobby, on the notice boards in rainbow room and in red group room.

The key commitment of the United Reformed Pre-School policy is for safeguarding children.

- The pre-school is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service.
 - The pre-school 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 can I do if I suspect a child is being abused' (DoH2004)
1. Talk to Mrs Robinson (manager), Mrs Arnott or the church Elder- Bronwen Davis
 2. Children services (including out of hours) 0300 123 4043
 3. The child abuse Investigation Unit: via 101 this is a specialist team within the police with countrywide responsibility for undertaking child protection investigations
 4. The police 999

- The pre-school is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.
- All staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures. During half termly staff meetings, if necessary, they are given up to date information and knowledge of safeguarding issues
- Parents are made aware of any changes regarding safeguarding by being given an up-to-date policy when appropriate.
- At the URC Pre-school we provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the provision are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All new staff are informed of the need to carry out DBS checks with the Criminal Records Bureau 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.
- At the URC Pre-School we abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the provision or has access to the children.

We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

- the criminal records disclosure reference number
- the date the disclosure was obtained; and
- details of who obtained it.
- NB Any new staff joining the team at any time will be asked to join the ongoing disclosure scheme.

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). Staff must disclose any offenses or notifiable incidents, however minor, which may occur during the time in which they are employed at the URC Pre-School. Management will also remind staff to disclose any information during their Supervision meeting.

Disqualification

In the event of the disqualification of a member of staff, a person living in the same household as the member of staff, or a person employed in that household, the member of staff must not continue to work – nor be directly concerned in the management of such provision. Where the church or manager becomes aware of relevant information which may lead to disqualification of an employee,

they must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. In the event of disqualification of a member of staff, the setting must not continue to employ that person. The URC Pre-School must give Ofsted the following information when relevant:

- details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- the date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose.
- the body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and
- a certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).

The information must be provided to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the date the provider became aware of the information.

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 staff are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they should seek medical advice. The management must ensure that staff only work 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 in the locked cupboard, and out of reach of children, always.

Staff training, support, and skills

We ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, the equality policy, and health and safety issues.

Staff can raise issues arising about their role during half-termly supervisions with the managers.

Visitors

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- Visitors are asked to read a card detailing a 'code of conduct' they must abide by whilst on the premises before signing in.

On visiting our setting, we must ask you to agree and abide by the following: -

- Please turn off any mobile phone and place in our visitor drawer or out of sight and use.
- No photograph or recording of any child is permitted at any time.
- On leaving the garden, please ensure you close and replace chains on the gates.
- No hot drinks are permitted in any of the rooms at any time.

- Please do not place bags, push chairs etc near the fire exits as these must be always clear.
- Anything you see or hear whilst with us must remain confidential.

In addition, parent helpers please should agree to the following:

- Do not answer the door or let anyone in or out of the building at any time. The Pre-School staff will attend to this.
- Only Pre-School staff are permitted in the toilets with a child.
- Please make sure that on leaving the kitchen unattended, you bolt the door.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the provision so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Abuse

Bruising

At the URC pre-school we know children who are mobile will sustain bruises from everyday activities and accidents. However, all staff will be aware that some patterns of bruising could mean that physical abuse may have taken place. These patterns may be found on the following parts of the body

- Cheeks
- Abdomen
- Back
- Buttocks
- Head
- Upper arms
- Outside of the thigh

These are the most common places, but staff do recognise that there may be bruising on other parts of the body.

Staff will make management aware of any abusive bruises that carry the imprint of a hand or that have dots of blood under the skin. Patterns of bruising may even be brought to the management's attention in the case of younger siblings.

Terrorism and Radicalisation

The Prevent Duty became law back in 2015 and at the URC preschool we realise we have a duty of care to prevent anyone being drawn into terrorism or being radicalised. It is important that the staff can identify children who may be vulnerable and know what to do if there is a concern. At the URC Preschool we promote British Values daily through the implementation of the EYFS to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

British values

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual Liberty and mutual respect
- Mutual respect

Witchcraft

At the URC Preschool we are also aware of the belief in witchcraft, spirit possession and other forms of the supernatural that can lead to children being blamed for bad luck, and subsequently abused. Fear of the supernatural is also known to be used to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

Responding to suspicions of abuse or concern

The URC Pre-School acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, neglect as well as FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and Breast ironing. When children are suffering from any of these forms of abuse, they 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 consider 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 meet.

- 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 Designated Officer. The information is stored in the child protection file in a secure place.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Staff will 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 16-25 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 considered, 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 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 act.
- 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 protection file in a secure place.

The manager acting as the Designated 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.

Liaison with other Bodies

- We work within the Area Safeguarding Children Board guidelines
- We have a copy of ‘What can I do if I suspect a child is being abused’ (HMG2006) for parents and staff, and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- The Targeted Advice service can be contacted on 01992 588757
- 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 (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.
- Details of the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children (NSPCC) contacts are also kept.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social services department, we act within the Area Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe	2.1 Respecting each other	3.4 the wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development.

Allegations against staff

At the URC we ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the provision.

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.
-

The URC Pre-School follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the provision.

- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within 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 to investigate. Contact the LADO on 01992 555420 within 1 working day.
- We may 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 services in conjunction with the police.

Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, Church elders 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 1

The United Reformed Pre-School is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of the pre-school.

Key Commitment 2

The pre-school 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 are worried a child is being abused' (DoH2004)

Key Commitment 3

The United Reformed Pre-School is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its Early Years Foundation Stage, promoting their right to be strong, 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 symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglects and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection 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 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.

Disclosure

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- Offers reassurance to the child.
- Listens to the child
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action.
- The member of staff does not question, the child.
- Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name.
- The child's address.
- The age of the child.

- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation of 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.
- The name of any other person presents at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and stored in the child protection file in a secure place.
- All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact.

If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local Area Safeguarding Children's board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentially

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 Area Safeguarding Children Board.

Supporting families

The United Reformed pre-school believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff, and volunteers in the group.

- The pre-school makes clear to parents its 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 social services department.
- The pre-school continues 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 social services department in relation to the setting's designated role and task in supporting the child and the family, after 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 procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Board.

Early Help Procedure

Access to personal records with regards to outside agencies via Early Help

- Parents may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below
- Any request to see the child protection file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the setting manager.
- The manager informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.
- The setting commits to providing access within 14 days – although this may be extended
- The Manager, the chairperson and the Designated Safeguarding Officer prepare the file for viewing
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. A copy of these letters is retained on the files
- Third parties include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The Manager, the chairperson of the Management committee and the Designated Safeguarding Officer go through the file and remove any information which third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
- What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the “clean copy”
- The ‘clean copy’ is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the Manager, so that it can be explained.
- Any disclosure of information will be discussed with support members of the Early Help team before disclosure.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parents has possible grounds for litigation against the United Reformed Pre-School or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the United Reformed Church Pre-School, which is to safety and well-being of the child. Please see also policy on child protection.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.1 Child development 1.2 Inclusive Practice 1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and Wellbeing	2.2 Parents and Partners. 2.3 Supporting Learning	3.2 Supporting every child 3.4 The wider context	

Whistle Blowing Guidance

Why Have a Confidential Reporting Procedure?

United Reformed Pre-School expects employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of their work to come forward and voice their concerns internally, within the organisation rather than overlooking the problem or “blowing the whistle” to someone outside.

United Reformed Pre-School also wishes to encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns and practice.

Procedures

What concerns are covered?

The procedure is intended to supplement, rather than replace, the existing Complaints, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and should not be used inappropriately. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures, e.g. Child Protection, will normally be referred under its own procedures. This Policy is intended to cover serious concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and may relate to something which:

- Is against Financial Regulations and policies
- Falls below established standards of practice
- Amounts to improper conduct, including something that is believed to be:
 - Against the law
 - A Health & Safety risk
 - Damaging to the environment
 - A misuse of money
 - Corruption or unethical conduct
 - Abuse of clients or service users

Who can an employee raise a concern with?

The employee should firstly raise their concerns with the manager. However, if they don't feel able to do this then they could approach the Management Committee chairperson - Mr Norman Deas.

How does an employee raise a concern?

The concern can be shared verbally or put in writing, but the Employee needs to make sure the person they are talking to is aware that they are following the Whistle Blowing Procedure.

How will the concern be dealt with?

The person who receives the initial concern (part of the management team) will make initial enquiries to determine whether the concern raised needs further investigation. Such initial enquiries should be dealt with promptly, thoroughly, impartially, and confidentially, in accordance with the Procedure. The management team will acknowledge the concern in writing, within 10 days, and give an indication of how the concern will/or has been dealt with. If it hasn't been dealt with then an indication of how long the procedure will take needs to be included.

Initial Enquiries

As part of the initial enquiries the member of the management team may meet with the employee to gather further information or clarify certain details. Employees are expected to co-operate fully with the investigation and disclose all relevant information. The member of the management team will record, in written format, all meetings. If other employees are able/willing to substantiate the concern they should also meet with the member of the management team dealing with the concern. If the management team believe other employees are aware, but don't feel able to come forward, then the management team should approach them and try to persuade them to share their concerns.

Possible outcome of initial enquiries

Depending on the nature of the concern, and the evidence found, possible outcomes include:

- Unable to investigate due to anonymous report and not enough information to proceed
- If the concern was shared but was inaccurate no further investigation would be carried out
- Where there is believed to be grounds for concern then further investigation will be carried out.

Further investigations

Dependant on the nature of the concern e.g. suspected fraud, theft, serious malpractice etc., the management team may investigate further.

Care needs to be taken when carrying out the investigation to:

- Protect the employee(s) concerned
- Avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised
- Avoid alerting other employees who may then warn the subject of the concern
- Record the information as the record may be used in a formal hearing, if it is a serious complaint
- Keep all records secure and confidential

Untrue allegations

If an employee raises a concern in good faith, but it is subsequently confirmed by the investigation to be untrue, no action will be taken against the employee. However, if the allegation is found to have been frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee.

Mobile Phones

To ensure we take every precaution to safeguard all children the use of mobile phones in the vicinity of the children is forbidden.

- All staff are required to switch off their mobile phones and leave them in a drawer behind the manager's desk. Should staff have any concerns on a family matter they will leave their phone on the manager desk and the manager will take any incoming calls for them, the member of staff will then be notified.
- Further action will be taken against any member of staff who is found with their mobile phone on their person or found using their mobile phone whilst with the children whether on duty or not.
- All parents/carers will be asked to switch off their phones whilst in the vicinity of the children. Staff will approach anyone found to be using their phone and ask them to end their call.
- All professional visitors and contractors will be asked to place their phones in the cupboard which is secured safely place during the duration of their visit. When the person is leaving the building, their phone will be returned. Anyone refusing to relinquish their mobile phone will not be allowed access to the pre-school and asked to leave.
- The pre-school has a phone kept by the manager for contact by and with the pre-school.
- A separate phone will be taken out on outings

This policy has been introduced to ensure the safety of all children and anyone refusing to comply with this policy may be asked to leave the premises.

Cameras

- Staff must not bring their own cameras or phones with cameras into the setting.
- Photographs of children are only taken for valid reasons, i.e. to record their learning and development, or for displays within the setting.
- Photographs of children are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting.
- Cameras are monitored by the setting manager
- Where parents request permission to photograph of their own children at special events, permission will first be gained from all parents for their children to be included.
- Photographs of children are only taken of children if there is written permission to do so (found on the individual child's registration form)

Reviewed September 2021