



## Safeguarding Children

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn and develop in an environment that is both safe and secure. Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do; our policies, procedures and risk assessments are designed to ensure we offer an enabling environment for children, where risks are minimised and managed, and children are protected from harm and abuse.

This policy applies to all staff, and includes students and volunteers working in the setting. It considers statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education, Ofsted and local guidance issued by the Sheffield Safeguarding Board.

Our aims of this policy are:

- To protect children by providing an environment where children feel confident in knowing how to approach adults in the setting if they are in difficulty or wish to complain and children are supported to learn how to keep themselves safe or free from prejudice, including when online.
- To help children to develop a positive sense of themselves, to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities.
- To enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- To create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued, and children are engaged with the wider community.
- To raise awareness with all staff of their personal responsibility to safeguard children.
- To ensure children are safeguarded whilst on the premises and to anticipate and manage risks that they may face in the wider community.
- To support staff in identifying the indicators of abuse so that they are confident to take appropriate action.
- To have a clear, robust and structured child protection procedure which is well understood by all adults in the setting and to pro-actively reduce the risk of harm or actual harm to children in the setting.
- To ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) fulfils their responsibility regarding any child abuse concerns by following the policy in a timely manner, recording appropriately and supporting other staff with advice and training.
- To support staff in the setting to provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the welfare, safeguarding and learning and development of the individual child.
- To know how to take appropriate action if there is a concern about the behaviour of an adult (or older child) in the setting.

- To know where to seek additional advice if there are issues concerning sexual exploitation, child exploitation, radicalisation or extremism and take appropriate action.

The legal framework for this work is:

- Working together to safeguard children 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Education Act 2011
- Childcare Act 2006
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2017
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015

This policy complies with Ofsted - Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills setting (2019)

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to meet statutory obligations.

Safeguarding can be described as the actions taken to protect children from maltreatment

#### **Working together to Safeguard Children defines safeguarding as:**

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

There are four main types of child abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018): Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse (P.E.N.S.)

There are specific issues that have also become critical issues in safeguarding and The Nature Box will endeavour to ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with processes to identify and report concerns regarding:

- o Bullying, including cyber bullying and prejudiced bullying
- o Child criminal exploitation including county lines
- o Child sexual abuse
- o Child sexual abuse within the family
- o Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and as defined by Working Together 2018

- o Children at risk of criminal exploitation (CRE) as defined by local safeguarding partnership procedures and County Lines (where children may be trafficked within England for the purpose of criminal exploitation by urban gangs that supply drugs to suburban areas, market or coastal towns and/ or other urban areas) .
- o Domestic Violence
- o Drugs
- o Emotional abuse
- o Fabricated or induced illness
- o Faith abuse
- o Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) & Breast Ironing/binding
- o Forced Marriage
- o Gangs and Youth Violence
- o Gender based violence/Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- o Hate
- o Homelessness
- o Honour based violence (so called)
- o Neglect
- o Mental Health
- o Missing children and vulnerable adults
- o Peer on peer abuse, such as sexual violence and harassment
- o Physical abuse
- o Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- o Private Fostering
- o Preventing Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- o Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- o Risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example 'sexting'
- o Self- harm
- o Substance misuse
- o Teenage Relationship abuse
- o Trafficking

Safeguarding also relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- children's and learners' health and safety and well-being, including their mental health
- meeting the needs of children who have SEND
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate and personal care and emotional well-being
- online safety and associated issues
- appropriate arrangements to ensure children's and learners' safety and security, taking into account the local context

Any risks to the child regarding parents/carers behaviour e.g. misusing drugs or alcohol or a child going missing, being vulnerable to radicalisation or sexual exploitation or knowledge about a private fostering/host family arrangements etc will be shared with the local authority children's social care service.

## **Methods**

### **Staffing and volunteering**

The registered person, Charlotte Middleton, takes responsibility for ensuring that all members of staff have been checked for their suitability for working with children with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and have an Enhanced disclosure indicating this.

OFSTED will be informed of any changes to the registered person and will undertake the necessary checks with the DBS for them.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within our 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 checks 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.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the pre-school or has access to the children.
- Volunteers and students on placement require an Enhanced disclosure to work in the pre-school. Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.
- We provide induction training which will cover our safeguarding procedure. New staff members, volunteers and students will be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected. They will also be made aware of our procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the whistle blowing policy.

- Children are never left unsupervised with visitors and the identity of all visitors will be checked if children are being cared for at the time of the visit. Visitors must have a valid reason for visiting and sign in when they arrive and leave in the visitors' log.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

### **Key carers**

Children and learners can identify a trusted adult with whom they can communicate about any concerns. They report that adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Where children or learners have been or are at risk of harm, the trusted adult has been instrumental in helping them to be safe in accordance with agreed local procedures. Children who are unable to share their concerns, for example babies and very young children, form strong attachments to those who care for them through the consistency of a trusted adult throughout our sessions.

### **Training**

We ensure that all staff attend child protection training to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. All staff will receive regular updates on safeguarding – at least annually. The DSL will attend Designated Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding training every two years; and their knowledge and skills will be refreshed annually which will be shared with the staff team.

Staff will be trained to meet our requirements under the Prevent Duty. To challenge negative attitudes and stereotyping. To be alert to harmful behaviours by influential adults in the child's life, such as discriminatory and/or extremism discussions between family and/or staff members. To identify a family who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified.

### **Staff behaviour**

- All staff and volunteers must disclose to the setting any change of circumstances where they could be barred from working with children (Childcare Regulations 2006 updated - 31st August 2018).
- All staff have a personal responsibility to keep up to date with knowledge and training about safeguarding and know what to do if a concern is raised.
- All staff must be vigilant, alert to potential warning signs and minimise risk.
- All staff must take responsibility for their own behaviour, understand the need for professional boundaries and to avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations and subsequent consequences
- All staff must be alert to any inappropriate behaviour of others and report any concerns to their DSL immediately.
- Staff must not discuss any issues relating to the setting, children or staff outside of the setting, or act in a way which could be deemed inappropriate or bring the setting into disrepute.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from our setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child we must refer the case to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of inclusion on the barred lists.

## **Curriculum**

We introduce key elements of child protection into our curriculum, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create a culture of value and respect for the individual. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and we help and support is given to children about how to treat others with respect.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

A key element of the Prevent strategy is the promoting Fundamental British values.

- o Mutual respect and tolerance
- o Individual liberty
- o Democracy
- o Rule of law

The EYFS supports early year's providers to do this in an age appropriate way, through ensuring children learn right from wrong, share with other children and value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.

Children know how to get support if they experience bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. Please see our Prevent Duty Policy for more information.

## **Information sharing**

Information sharing is vital in order to provide effective early help and to keep children safe from harm. This includes sharing relevant information regarding safeguarding issues or concerns with partners, external agencies, other settings, and schools that a child may attend. Information will be shared in line with the guidance: 'Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers- 2018' and will be stored safely and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Requirements 2018.

Concerns regarding the welfare of a child will usually be discussed with the parents, but not if there is a view that this would put a child, a vulnerable adult or the member of staff at risk or if advised not to do so by social care or the police etc.

Detailed, confidential, and accurate written records of concerns about a child will be kept securely. Any concerns regarding confidentiality will never be used as a justification for withholding information when it would be in the child's best interests to share it.

If any child with a known child protection plan has a safeguarding concern raised or is absent without explanation, this will be referred to their Social Worker/Social Care Team with urgency and as soon as possible.

Ofsted registered settings have a statutory responsibility to notify Ofsted of a serious incident or accident.

### **Complaints**

- We ensure that all parents know how to voice their concerns, how to make a complaint via the setting's complaints policy and how the setting will investigate their concerns. A copy of our child protection policy and safeguarding procedures are available to parents in setting or on our website. Our parent folder contains Ofsted's contact details should parents wish to complain directly to Ofsted.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
- We allow investigations to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.

### **Definitions with regards to Safeguarding**

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Child protection** is the protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home.

**Safeguarding** is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

#### **Safeguarding means:**

- o protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- o preventing harm to children's health or development
- o ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- o taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

#### **Significant harm**

The Children Act 1989 introduced **Significant Harm** as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm.

**Physical abuse** includes hitting, shaking, kicking, punching, scalding, suffocating and other ways of inflicting pain or injury to a child. It also includes giving a child harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- o provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- o protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- o ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- o ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Young Bullying** involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour. The children in our care have not reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another. However, the children may come into contact with older children capable of bullying and need to be taught coping strategies.

**Safeguarding issues** can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse (children abusing other children). This could include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults, harassment and child/youth produced imagery "sexting" etc. Any peer on peer abuse will be dealt with via the setting's Promoting positive behaviour policy or the broader child protection procedure, as appropriate. We will also ensure that the needs of children and young people who abuse others will also be considered along-side those who have been abused.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Criminal Exploitation of Children**

Children may be vulnerable to neglect, abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives or on-line.

**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. Criminal exploitation of children is also a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the DSL who will seek advice from agencies and professionals; including, reference to the Local Safeguarding Partnership procedures. This will mean a referral to the police and Starting Point and supporting the child in a sensitive manner.

### **Vulnerable children**

Children are supported, age appropriately, to understand and recognise risk and are aware of who to talk to if they have a concern. A number of common barriers exist that could prevent children from telling about being abused. Staff should be alert to the needs of children who may be vulnerable and will have to overcome additional barriers; this could include a child who:

- o is disabled and has specific additional needs
- o has special educational needs
- o is a young carer
- o is showing signs of engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour
- o is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence and is showing early signs of abuse or neglect.

### **Dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers' procedure**

The Staff at The Nature Box intend to create within the setting an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. We also intend to ensure that as far as practicable staff are protected from unfounded allegations of abuse.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for dealing with allegations against a member of staff or volunteer. Concerns relating to the DSL or members of the management committee should be discussed with The Manager at Wood Lane Countryside Centre or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

### **Raising a concern**

This procedure should be applied when there is an allegation or concerns that any person who works or volunteers with the playgroup has behaved in a way that:

- has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

Any concerns or allegations about the behaviour of the member of staff or volunteer should be raised confidentially with the DSL. The DSL must complete the LADO Referral Form.

The first priority must be to ensure the immediate safety of the child and other children affected, or who may be in contact with the individual (including their own children). Some allegations will be so serious they require immediate intervention by Police and/or Social Care. In these situations, the manager will need to involve the Police (for example if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a criminal offence) and/or Children's Social Care where there are immediate Child Protection concerns e.g. where a child has been injured. Where there is no such evidence, the manager should, in the first instance, discuss the allegations with the LADO in order to help determine whether Police and/or Social Care involvement is necessary - this discussion should take place within 1 working day. The purpose of an initial discussion is for the manager and LADO to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The LADO may ask the manager to provide or obtain relevant information, such as previous history, whether the child or the family have made similar allegations and the individual's current contact with any children.

The Employer should not ask the employee any questions that will interfere with any criminal investigation until it has been agreed by LADO and police.

Allegations reported to the Police and/or Children's Social Care should also be immediately reported to the LADO. The LADO will agree with the setting any further actions that are required and how and when the person the allegation has been made against will be informed of the concern, and this is dependent on the nature of the allegation.

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, or a criminal offence might have been committed, a Strategy Discussion will be held, involving police, LADO, the Employer, Children's Social Care and other agencies as appropriate. The aim of the Strategy Discussion will be to share relevant information and determine whether an investigation needs to be conducted by:

- Social care regarding child protection concerns
- Police regarding any possible criminal offences
- Or via the Employer disciplinary/ capability procedures

### **During the investigation**

If the individual resigns, or ceases their service, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this procedure.

### **Confidentiality**

It is extremely important that when an allegation is made, the Employer makes every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while the allegation is being investigated or considered.

The Employer can take advice from the LADO, Police and Children's Social Care to agree the following:

- Who needs to know and what information can be shared;
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip;

- What, if any information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation; and
- How to manage press interest if and when it should arise.

### Supporting those involved

Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the individuals is key to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and explained the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by Children's Social Care or the Police.

We will appoint a Contact Officer (not the investigating officer), to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual.

The individual should be advised to contact a source of professional support e.g. ACAS helpline adviser on 0300 123 1100 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 9am-1pm Saturday).

Social contact with colleagues should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

Parents or carers should also be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome i.e. whether substantiated or not. Where there is a criminal investigation, the Police have a responsibility to keep a victim informed, and any prosecution is in the public domain, however they cannot be told the outcome of any disciplinary or other internal process.

The impact on any child concerned must be considered and all agencies involved should liaise to ensure that the child's needs are addressed, providing appropriate support.

### **Suspension**

In some cases, the Employer will need to consider suspending the individual until the case is resolved.

Suspension should not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported; all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. Suspension should be considered only in a case where:

- There is a cause to suspect a child/ren is at risk of harm; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

The Employer must consider carefully whether the circumstances warrant suspension or whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements. They should seek advice from the LADO and LAW-CALL (24 hour legal helpline service on 01455 255 205); the decision to suspend is a matter for the employer. Depending on the nature of the allegation the Employer should consider the potential permanent professional reputational damage to employees that can result from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated or maliciously intended.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, the rationale and justification for such a course of action should be agreed and recorded by both the Employer and LADO. This should include what alternatives to suspension have been considered and why they were rejected. The individual should be given written confirmation, by the Employer usually within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The Employer should also inform the person whose named contact is within the organisation, their contact details and the support available to them. The Contact Officer should ensure they are kept informed of both progress of the case and current work issues.

Children's Social Care or the Police cannot require the Employer to suspend the member of staff or a volunteer, although they should give appropriate weight to their advice. The power to suspend is vested in the Employer. Where a Strategy Discussion or initial evaluation concludes that there should be enquiries by Children's Social Care and/or an investigation by the Police, the LADO should canvass Police and Children's Social Care for views about whether the individual needs to be suspended from contact with children. The LADO should then inform the Employer of these views.

If a suspended person is to return to work, the Employer should consider what help and support might be appropriate, for example a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor, and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the work place.

### **On completion of investigation**

The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false;
- **Unsubstantiated:** this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence.

The conclusion of any investigation should be clearly communicated in writing by the LADO to the Employer, who is then responsible for communicating this to the individual along with any actions agreed within the investigation.

If an individual disputes the outcome of an investigation, their right of challenge will ordinarily be with the employer through disciplinary or grievance procedures. Employers, by agreeing actions with the LADO or in a Strategy Meeting, have accepted responsibility for these decisions and must be able to justify them to an employee or in any employment process.

Individuals may apply for access to their record under subject access procedure; such applications will be considered by the LADO and relevant documents, appropriately redacted, will be shared.

### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The Police or CPS should inform the Employer and LADO immediately when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or if it decided to close the investigation without charge, or not to continue to prosecute the case after the person has been charged. In these circumstances the LADO and the Employer should discuss whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is

appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The information from Children's Social Care and the Police should inform the decision.

### **Disciplinary process**

The LADO and Employer should discuss whether disciplinary or other internal action is appropriate in all cases independently of any decision by the Police and CPS in relation to prosecution. However, the decision regarding any disciplinary action is the sole responsibility of the employer; they will be separately accountable for any such decision, which is subject to the usual criteria and right of appeal as usual under employment law.

The discussion should consider any potential misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of the member of staff and take into account any relevant information from the Police and/or Children's Social Care, the result of any investigation or trial and the different standard of proof in disciplinary and criminal proceedings. Employers should also consider lesser action, such as increased supervision, mentoring, training.

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the Employer ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the Employer must refer the case to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of inclusion on the barred lists.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance> or contact the DBS barring helpline on 01325 953795.

Referral should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the member of staff involved and within one month of ceasing to use the person's services. Substantiated allegations are also likely to be Professional misconduct cases and should be referred to Ofsted

The Employer should provide written confirmation to the LADO of when the referral was reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Ofsted. In addition, the LADO should also be informed of the outcomes of any disciplinary hearings and appeals.

Where it is decided on the conclusion of a case that the individual can be considered for return to work with children, the Employer must consult with the LADO about any required safeguarding measures.

### **Malicious, false or unsubstantiated allegations**

If the investigation leads to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern; this decision and a justification for it should be recorded by the Employer and the LADO, and agreement reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The Employer should then consider with the LADO what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation. The Employer may implement an action plan detailing relevant staff support and training particularly in respect of child development, behaviour management and child protection/safeguarding.

If an allegation is determined to be malicious, false or unsubstantiated, the Employer and LADO should consider if the child concerned is in need of any services or if they may have been abused by someone else and refer as appropriate.

## **Record keeping**

The following details will be recorded immediately using Appendix 2 Dealing with allegations reporting form:

Name of child

Name of individual involved

When and where the alleged incident took place (either inside or outside the workplace)

The names of any witnesses

Details of the incident – including what was done and said in the child's or adult's own words

What steps if any were taken

Details of any injuries to any of the parties involved

Details of parent/carer and any siblings

Countersign and date the record

A copy of the LADO referral form should be kept with this form.

A running record must be kept and attached to this form, logging all actions, conversations, telephone calls, correspondence that are made as a result of the concern. The Chronology of significant events form (034 GEP Safeguarding Appendix 4) could be used for this purpose. The entries must be dated and signed by the person carrying out that action. If an entry is made on behalf of someone else this must be made clear on the log. Any attempts at making contact with third parties must also be recorded as must any details of messages left.

Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records; these are a very small minority of allegations made. For all other allegations it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the individual, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The record should be retained at least until the individual has reached retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

## **Information sharing**

First point of contact is the DSL.

The DSL will inform the Employer and the LADO.

The LADO will consult with Children's Social Care and the Police as appropriate and inform the Employer of any intention to do so.

The Employer should seek advice from LADO regarding the point at which information should be shared with the individual.

Parents or carers of a child involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.

Ofsted must be informed of the incident (0300 1231231) within 14 days.

Our insurance company should also be informed of the situation, without sharing any confidential information in case legal advice/representation maybe needed in the future.

### **Protecting staff/volunteers from unfounded allegations**

In order to protect staff/volunteers from unfounded allegations of abuse we will ensure that:

- When recruiting staff we will ensure that any gaps in Employment History are questioned and adequately accounted for and that References are taken up for all staff before positions are confirmed.
- Only staff who have been DBS checked will be allowed to take children to the toilet, or have sole care of the children. Staff/adults awaiting their DBS clearance will be supervised around the children at all times (including visitors).
- New staff members undergo an induction process where the Supervisor/Employer will discuss aspects of Child Protection/Safeguarding including how to protect themselves from unfounded allegations.
- New staff members will receive copies of the setting policies and procedures prioritising Child Protection/Safeguarding and Achieving Positive Behaviour policies.
- Staff appraisal/supervisory meetings give staff opportunities to discuss concerns about behaviour, procedures or the quality of care provided. Staff are aware of our Whistleblowing procedure.
- Where staff are left in sole supervision with a small group of children – e.g. during story, then such activities are held in areas with visual access, enabling other staff members to monitor and support supervision by being able to see into the rooms/areas.
- During Forest School sessions staff are deployed around the site to ensure the children are safe. The session leader will monitor staff and ensure they remain within sight of another member of the team. Staff are mindful of safeguarding when setting up the toilet area to ensure that it can be monitored.
- All staff are encouraged and supported to attend appropriate training in Child Development, Child Protection/Safeguarding and Behaviour Management.

### **The Non-Collection of Children Policy**

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult, we will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

#### **Procedures:**

- Parents of children starting at our sessions are asked to provide specific information, which is recorded on our registration form, including:
- Home address and telephone number – if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbours.
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable).

- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from Forest school, for example a childminder or grandparent.
- Password to be used by adults when collecting their child from pre-school.
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.

On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they record how they can be contacted in our daily register.

On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they record the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child in our daily register. We agree with parents how the identification of the person who is to collect their child is to be verified, for example by using the agreed password.

Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take appropriate action. We provide parents with our contact telephone number.

If a child is not collected at the end of the session, we follow the following procedures:

- The daily register and registration form is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the registration form – are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the registration form and in the daily register.
- If no-one collects the child after 30 minutes and there is no named contact who can be contacted, we apply the procedures set out in our Safeguarding Children Policy.
- If we have cause to believe the child has been abandoned, we will contact Sheffield Safeguarding Hub on 0114 273 4855. We will be led by the local team and contact the police if advised.
- After an additional 15 minutes if the child has not been collected, we will contact the above agencies again.
- The child stays on site in the care of two fully vetted workers one of whom will be the Supervisor until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker (or by another person specified by social care).
- Social care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances will we go to look for the parent, nor leave the setting premises with the child.
- We ensure that the child is not anxious, and we do not discuss our concerns in front of them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.

- Depending on the circumstances we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed.

### **The Non-Attendance of children policy**

#### **Policy**

- Although attendance at the setting is not a mandatory requirement, the setting will be alert to patterns of absence that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns. Where a child goes missing from home or from the setting there is a coordinated response to reduce the risk of harm to them.
- We consider good attendance as essential if children are to be settled and take full advantage of the learning and development opportunities we offer.
- We believe regular attendance lays a foundation for a child's future success at school and beyond.
- The setting will work closely with parents to promote children's good attendance in particular for children for whom the provider receives the early year's pupil premium.
- Fees remain payable during any absence.
- If your child is sick or is unable to attend for some reason, you must call the supervisor
- The daily register notes absences of children.
- Information given by parents for the absence of their child will be recorded in the daily register. An absence log must also be completed for children in receipt of the Early Years Funding.
- In the event of the parent not being contacted, the supervisor will attempt to contact them later that day. If we cannot contact the parent, we would try to reach other family members using information in the registration form.
- If there is evidence that the family may be vulnerable to radicalisation, then we would contact the Prevent Team or Sheffield Safeguarding Board.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Ofsted may be informed. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-provider-non-compliance-action-by-ofsted>