

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Principles**

At Superstars Daycare & Afterschool we work with the children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped, to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form. We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. Within Superstars we strive to protect children from the risk of abuse and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures. Child protection is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this policy must be used in conjunction with Superstars other policies and procedures.

This policy is in accordance with regional SBNI (Safeguarding board Northern Ireland) policies and procedures and Co-operating to Safeguard Children & Young People 2016 (Revised August 2017)

**Statement of Intent**

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

• Create a safe and secure environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image by keeping the child at the centre of all we do

• Always listen to children

• Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct

• Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development

• Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities

• Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision making and how to promote values through play, discussion and role modelling

• Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need

• Share information with other agencies as appropriate the designated child protection officers for Superstars Daycare & Afterschool are:

* Tara McKibben – 07759508371
* Leanne Neill - 07849380231

**Procedures**

Superstars aims to:

• Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour

• Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures

• Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need

• Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by The Gateway Team

• Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interests

• Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children

• Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with Superstars and are kept informed of all updates when they occur

• Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements

Excluding known abusers from the setting

To achieve this, we will ensure:

* Access NI checks
* New staff are employed in line with Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996
* All appointments will be subject to satisfactory clearance by social services
* All appointments will be subject to a probationary period, which should be reviewed periodically within six months of taking up the post.

**What are the types of abuse?**

*Physical abuse*

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child of young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or object, slapping, punching, kicking, poisoning, burning and scalding, breaking bones and drowning and much more. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

Signs of physical abuse –

* Bruises
* Broken or fractured bones
* Burns or scalds
* Bite marks

It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as:

* Scarring
* The effects of poisoning such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
* Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

*Neglect*

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. There are 4 types of neglect; Physical, educational, emotional and medical.

Signs of neglect –

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have:

* Poor appearance and hygiene
* Health and development problems
* Housing and family issues
* Change in behaviour

*Sexual abuse*

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

There are 2 types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online. Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes:

* sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
* using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
* forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
* making a child undress or touch someone else.

Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative.

Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online.

Signs of sexual abuse –

* Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
* Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn’t expect them to know
* Having nightmares or bed-wetting
* Alcohol or drug misuse
* Self-harm
* Changes in eating habits
* Changes in their mood
* Bruises
* Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
* Sexually transmitted infections

*Emotional abuse*

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of [abuse](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/), which means it can be difficult to [spot the signs](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/emotional-abuse/#signs) or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Emotional abuse includes: humiliating or constantly criticising a child, threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names, making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child, blaming and scapegoating, making a child perform degrading acts and much more.

Signs of emotional abuse –

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. And a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting.

children who are being emotionally abused might:

* seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
* struggle to control their emotions
* have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
* act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

*Exploitation*

Exploitation is a form of abuse where someone is forced or coerced into doing things for the benefit of others.

* exploitation is often a gradual process
* people are [groomed](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/grooming/) and introduced to new ideas, behaviours and activities, making these appear normal and acceptable
* people may not recognise that they are being exploited until their situation becomes very serious
* exploitation can take many forms, can take place in a range of situations, and can involve many groups of people.

**Key points**

* people can experience many forms of exploitation at once
* for example someone who is forced to work in a business for lower than the legal minimum wage (**modern slavery**) may be transported across the country to different locations where they can be exploited (**human trafficking**), they may be **sexually exploited** by their enslavers and their money may have been stolen from them (**financial exploitation**)

**Common forms of exploitation include**

**Criminal exploitation** – being forced to take part in criminal activities such as transporting or selling illegal items (e.g. drugs); participating in violent or [acquisitive crime;](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/exploitation/acquisitive-crime/) or [grooming](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/grooming/) and exploiting other people.

**Drug trafficking**– being forced to transport drugs to areas where they can be sold and distributed. This can involve [county lines](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/county-lines/) activities (where drug gangs transport drugs to towns and cities along ‘deal lines’). Drug trafficking can be a form of [modern slavery and human trafficking](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/modern-slavery/) if people are forced to travel to take part in the transportation and sale of drugs.

[**Financial exploitation**](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/financial-exploitation/) – being deceived or coerced into handing over monetary funds or assets to others. This can happen through scams, fraud, blackmail, or through accruing debts.

**Labour exploitation**– being forced to work for little or no pay, often in poor conditions. People experiencing labour exploitation may have limited freedom and may be forced to live with other workers. Labour exploitation is a form of modern slavery.

[**Modern slavery**](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/modern-slavery/) – having control or ownership over another person and using this power to exploit them. Modern slavery can include human trafficking, enslavement, domestic servitude and forced labour.

[**Sexual exploitation**](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/identifying-exploitation/sexual-exploitation/) – a form of sexual abuse where people are encouraged, manipulated or forced to participate in sexual acts. They may be threatened with violence and may be [groomed](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/home/what-is-exploitation/grooming/) by offers of affection, money or gifts.

**Exploitation can always**

* affect any child, young person or adult, regardless of age, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and sexuality
* be carried out by individuals or groups – perpetrators usually hold power over the victim, for example because of their age, gender, status or wealth
* involve force, control, coercion and intimidation, often accompanied by violence or the threat of violence
* involve [grooming](https://www.preventingexploitationtoolkit.org.uk/causes-of-exploitation/grooming/)
* involve people being forced to take part in the exploitation of others
* involve people being forced to take part in criminal activity
* involve control and coercion – this could be psychological or physical
* make people more vulnerable to other forms of exploitation.

**Exploitation may be taking place** **even if someone seems to be making their own choices or the activity, they are taking part in appears consensual** – the person’s vulnerability and the situation’s exploitative nature can take away their freedom and capacity to make their own decisions.

People may feel trapped and unable to escape their situation or tell others what is going on. People involved in exploitative stations must always be considered victims and offered appropriate support.

Signs of exploitation –

* Frequently absent from school and doing badly in school
* Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
* Being angry, aggressive or violent.
* In a relationship or handing out with someone older than them.
* Being isolated or withdrawn.
* Having unexplained money and buying new things.
* Using ‘slang’ words
* Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.

*All staff within the setting are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and understand their responsibility to: be aware of the Trust protocol for reporting concerns; report concerns without delay to the appropriate HSC Trust, Maintain a signed and dated record of anything which causes them concern, including any allegations made by the child; and keep concerns confidential to those people who need to know.*

Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse

* Staff will share concerns with the Designated Child Protection Officer, accurate written details will be recorded of the suspicions or concerns and they will be kept in the locked filing cabinet in the Manager’s office, the gateway team will be contacted for advice on the matter and the Early Years Team will be informed
* Check with parents to explain unexplained bruises, marks or changes in behaviour. Discussing delicate matters like this should be handled in a non-threatening way by the Designated Child Protection Officer
* The Designated Child Protection Officer will inform the Duty Officer in the Gateway Team.
* If a child is already known to Social Services, direct contact will be made with their Social Worker and the Early Years Team
* Parents will be informed of the referral in consultation with the Early Years Team/The Gateway Team.
* Staff will make a written record of the concern
* The Proprietor will be informed that a referral has been made to The Gateway Team.
* The Designated Child Protection Officer for Superstars will attend all Child Protection Case Conferences with Social Services
* All records will be kept until the child’s 21st birthday due to the possibility of legal action
* Tara McKibben and Leanne Neill are the Designated Child Protection officers.

**Procedure for reporting incidents**

Staff / Parent

**Designated person**

Name: Tara McKibben Name: Leanne Neill

Telephone: 07759508371 Telephone: 07849380231

Southern Health & Social Care Trust Children’s Gateway Team

Fiona Maguire Tel. 02837415285

Tel. 02840621600 Tel. 08007837745 (\*freephone)

Tel. 02895049999 (regional out of hours)

Tel. 028 3834 3011 (Banbridge & Craigavon gateway team)

Police

\*Free phone number is only free from landlines

If you have a concern between 9am-5pm, please ring 02837415285. Any concerns after 5pm each day, weekends and bank holidays – report to out of hours number!

**Sharing information**

To achieve this, we will:

* Share any concerns only with those agencies that need to know.
* Involving parents and children appropriately as recommended by Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.
* We will notify Southern Health & Social Care Trust regarding changes to the staff team i.e. if we employ a new member of staff or if a member of staff leaves the setting. We will also inform social services of names and addresses of volunteer staff and relief staff member.
* We will assist social services in providing as much information as possible for the pre-employment checks.
* If a member of staff/designated officer has a concern that a child may be at risk of neglect or abuse it is not necessary to seek parental permission before reporting to the relevant authorities.

**Whistle Blowing**

If a member of staff has a concern about another member of staff’s behaviour e.g. inappropriate contact with children, they must approach the manager without fear of retribution. Any concern a staff member has will be recorded and investigated appropriately. Social services will also be informed of any concerns that have been highlighted regarding a staff member’s behaviour. Advice will also be sought from Early Years.

*Parents are also encouraged to express any concerns they may have for their child’s care.*

**Links with other policies**

Complaints Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Equal Opportunity / Good relations Policy

Staff Development and training Policy

Whistle blowing Policy

**Owner/Management**

Signature