



## Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Management Committee considers it is the duty of all members, staff and volunteers to protect children and young people who they come into contact with from abuse. This is part of our safeguarding children procedure. Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances. If you are worried, it is **not** your responsibility to investigate and decide if it is abuse. It **is** your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

#### 1. What is Abuse?

**The 1989 Children Act recognises four categories of abuse:**

**Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury.

**Sexual Abuse:** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent or developmentally immature.

**Emotional Abuse:** Severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

**Neglect:** The persistent or severe neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

#### 2. Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse that occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

#### 3. Domestic Abuse

Staff may be working with children experiencing violence at home. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the above symptoms. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing Social Services.

#### 4. Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships, but the welfare of the child is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to abuse to themselves. Therefore, confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the child.



- All information that has been collected on any child will be kept locked and secure and access will be limited to appropriate staff, management and relevant agencies.
- Records relating to individual children will be kept for a reasonable period of time (at least 3 years) after the children have left the provision.
- In the event of investigation it is essential that no information on Child Protection concerns relating to a child are disclosed inappropriately. Any such leaks could have serious consequences for both the child concerned and any investigation.
- Whilst parents/carers have the right to see any records kept on their child this might not always be appropriate and should not put the child or yourself at risk.
- Records will be easily accessible and available for inspection by Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (with prior agreement by Ofsted, these may be kept off the premises).
- It is important that only those who need to know actually know to avoid rumour and gossip that could affect the child, parent/carer and the club.

## **5. Recognising Abuse**

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs, or behaviours that concern you. Staff should be alert to the following type of behaviour in children:

- Becoming excessively withdrawn or clingy
- Seeming to be keeping a secret
- Personality changes – becoming insecure
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places
- Acting out, in an inappropriate way, scenes or actions with toys or objects
- Unexplained bruising injuries or burns
- Sexually explicit language, actions or drawings

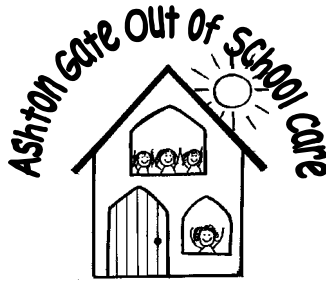
Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

## **6. What to do if Abuse is Disclosed**

The club is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively.

When a child discloses abuse, the member of staff should take the following action:

- 6.1 Stay calm.
- 6.2 Listen to what they child/young person is actually saying.
- 6.3 Offer reassurance to the child or young person that they were right to tell you, remain calm at all times.
- 6.4 Inform the child that the information cannot be kept confidential and will have to be passed onto the appropriate authority. Do NOT promise the child that



this can be kept secret, as a subsequent referral could then lead to the child feeling betrayed.

- 6.5 Record the conversation, in as much detail as possible. Include when and where the conversation took place. Draw a diagram to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person shows you, trying to indicate the size, shape and colour.
- 6.6 Record as soon as possible and use the actual words used by the child.
- 6.7 Keep all records factual. Be aware of not making assumptions or interpretations of what the child/young person is telling you. Store all records securely.
- 6.8 Do not interrogate the child or push for more information. Ensure that any questions asked are open, not leading closed questions. Do not ask the child to repeat what they have disclosed to another worker or committee member. Record accurately.
- 6.9 Discuss your concerns with the Play Centre Manager. If the allegations implicate a senior member of staff, the concerns should be discussed with the Management Committee member responsible for child protection.
- 6.10 The person to whom the disclosure was made is to ensure that the child who has reported the abuse is kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.
- 6.11 All records should be kept in a secure place and should be confidential. Parents/carers have the right to see any records kept on their child.
- 6.12 Information should only be shared on a need to know basis.

## **7. What to do if Abuse is Suspected**

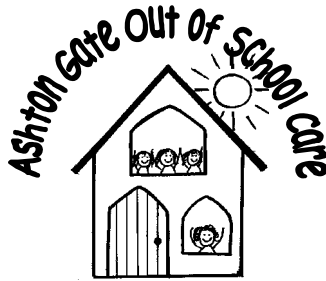
- 7.1 Where these types of behaviour have been noticed the staff should monitor the child's behaviour, keeping records of any particular incidents or concerns (where, when and what happened).
- 7.2 Discuss your concerns with a senior member of staff, who should then discuss any signs or behavioural changes, (e.g. bullying, accidents) that have been observed with the child's parents/carers at the earliest opportunity, to see if there is a known reason for this, (e.g. a change in family circumstances, the death of family member or pet).
- 7.3 You should remember that if abuse is taking place it may not be the parents, but other family members or friends who are causing the abuse. Parents can be the last to know.
- 7.4 Any member of staff can contact a relevant local agency (as listed at the end of the document) for advice to discuss any concerns that they may have before actually reporting any child protection issues; they may be able to offer guidance and support in how to deal with situations and confirm appropriate

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Updated: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Review: March 2011



action to take. It is appropriate to seek support from the nominated person/s in the organisation as to how to deal with situations and confirm appropriate action to take.

- 7.5 If you are still concerned about the welfare of the child or young person, this information must be referred to the appropriate authority. It is important to remember that if you do report concerns you are not reporting the parents or carers – you are protecting the welfare of the child.
- 7.6 If appropriate, inform parents/carers that you are going to report your suspicions/concerns. This might not always be possible and should not put the child or yourself at risk. When you report an incident the duty officer will ask you if the parent/carer has been informed, if they have not the duty officer will want to know why.
- 7.7 If the Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team (Social Services) has been contacted, they should let you know that they are responding to what you have told them. It is unlikely that you will be told what action has been taken unless it has implications for the club. If you have not heard from the Referral and Assessment Team, it may be appropriate to contact them to ensure that the details you gave them have been taken into consideration and acted upon.
- 7.8 As a result of dealing with disclosure or reporting your concerns, you may feel angry or upset. It is important that you are able to work this through. The Management Committee fully supports all members of staff in following this procedure and if you wish, you should talk to a member of the committee.

## **5. If You Suspect a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour**

If it appears that a staff member or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child or,
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or,
- Behaved in an inappropriate way towards a child which may indicate that he or she is unsuitable to work with children

Then these procedures must be followed:

- Record your concerns and report them to the Play Centre Manager
- The Play Centre Manager should take steps to ensure that during the remainder of the working day that member of staff is not left in sole charge of the children or any child.
- At the earliest opportunity, contact one the committee member responsible for child protection.
- The committee member responsible for child protection will contact the Designated Officer within the Early Years and Childcare Service who will then



contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to ask for advice and how to proceed and to give details of the concern.

- The setting should then follow the LADO's advice on how to deal with allegations against staff.
- Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.
- While support will be offered to the staff member involved, the staff and committee will ensure that the agencies concerned are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. The disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

#### **6. Support to Staff and Volunteers**

The Management Committee will fully support all members of staff in following this procedure. Following an allegation or investigation staff and volunteers can talk to the Management Committee member responsible for child protection and any other appropriate agencies listed at the end of this document.

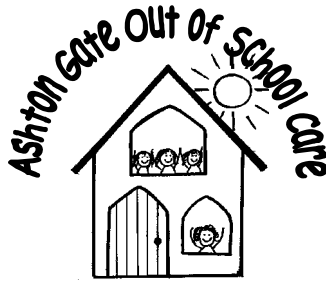
#### **7. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers**

We acknowledge that paedophiles and those that pose a threat to children may be attracted to employment that allows them access to children and young people. As part of this policy we will ensure that people working with the children are safe to do so. All staff and volunteers will be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau on joining the club, to be renewed every 3 years. Two references will be taken up prior to appointment for new staff and volunteers and a medical reference may also be required. Staff will be expected to attend training to keep up to date and informed on child protection issues. The recruitment and selection procedure of the club will be adhered to.

*See also Staffing, Recruitment and Employment Policy*

#### **8. Implementation and Monitoring**

- The Management Committee will agree a member with responsibility for child protection matters at its first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.
- This member will receive reports from the Play Centre Manager of any occasions when there are concerns or issues of child protection.
- The Management Committee will review this policy annually to ensure it is being implemented. Appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary, through consultation with the appropriate agencies.



**9. Contact Details**

- a. Committee member responsible for child protection: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior staff member responsible for child protection: \_\_\_\_\_

**b. Children's Social Care Referral & Assessment Team (Social Services):**

1. Symes House Office, Hartcliffe: 0117 964 2593
2. Broadwalk Office, Knowle: 0117 903 1414
4. Redhouse Office, Withywood: 0117 9031900
5. Disabled Children Team (all Bristol): 0117 903 8250  
Emergency Telephone Number (outside office hours): 01454 615 165  
Email (all Bristol): [childprotection@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:childprotection@bristol.gov.uk)

- c. Police Child Protection Team: 0117 945 4320  
Avon and Somerset Constabulary: 0845 456 7000  
Emergency: 999

**d. For staff allegations contact:**

Dawn Butler - 0117 903 6191 (Early Years and Childcare Services)

**e. Ofsted**

*Ofsted Compliance and Investigation Team* (for reporting any Child Protection concerns) - 08456 014 772  
*Ofsted Registration Inspector* – Tim Butcher

**f. Support and Advice**

- South West Child Protection Procedures (online guidance) [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)
- Childline – 0800 11 11 (open 24 hours)
- National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty of Children (NSPCC) – 0800 800 500
- Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (training) – 0117 353 2505
- BAND Development and Support Worker – Haidi Haskins – 0117 954 2156