

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Policy, Guidance and Child Protection including Whistleblowing

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Quote Ref: 3:4

'Providers must be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)'

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Family Centre complies with the statutory procedures set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** which is adapted locally by the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP).

We aim to:

- Provide early help to families to ensure that when they need support they have access to the appropriate services.
- Provide an environment where children, young people and families are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.
- Identify any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child or young person may be suffering from, or is likely to suffer from significant harm.
- Ensure all staff understand and implement effective child protection procedures
- Ensure Family Centre staff are vigilant, competent and confident to respond to safeguarding situations.
- Build relationships and support communication between staff, children, parents/carers and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust.

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What parents\carers should do

- Ask for help when you, your child or family are experiencing difficulties as the Family Centre has staff and services that can provide early help and support.
- Discuss with a member of staff any issues which may cause a change in your child's behaviour. For example a grandparent's death or a divorce/separation.
- Communicate any safeguarding or welfare concerns you have about your own child or any child within the community.
- Understand that Family Centre staff have a duty to identify concerns and raise them with you if it is appropriate
- Understand that the Family Centre will not discuss with you any concerns that they have about your child if they feel this may put them at risk of further harm, these concerns will be reported.

Guidance on the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

What is abuse?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – **a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.** Children may be abused in a family, in an institution or community setting, or over the internet, or be taken out of the country to be abused (in the case of female genital mutilation). Children can be placed at risk where professionals fail to act to prevent harm. The abuser's may be; known to them, it may a stranger's, it may be an adult's or another child\ren or young person's. Some children are more vulnerable than others, disabled children and children who have disabled parents are considerably more vulnerable to abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an

addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. Physical abuse can happen in any family, but may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (**World Health Organisation 2014**). FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. It is an offence for any person in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (regardless of their nationality or residence status) to perform FGM, or to assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself. It is also an offence to fail to protect a girl from FGM.

Indications that FGM may be about to take place

- The family come from a community that is known to practise FGM.
- Parents state they will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period.
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent.
- A child may confide that she is to have a “special procedure” or celebration.

Honour Based Violence

So-called honour based violence encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of a family or community.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage in the UK is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into marriage.

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. It 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. It 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.

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care or education at some point.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is sometimes known as psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example in the way a parent interacts with their child. It may include deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. 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 involve serious bullying -including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones-by a child's peers.

If any of the above signs and symptoms of abuse are identified, action will be taken if:

- There has been persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development including failure to thrive.
- There are severe adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of the child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.
- There has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning or where there is a definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- There has been an injury or injuries observed connected to sexual abuse or witnessed occasions where a child indicates sexual activity through play, drawings or has an excessive pre occupation with sexual matters or has an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

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Radicalisation

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. The Prevent duty requires the teaching of fundamental British Values those who oppose such values are extremists. Radicalisation is a form of abuse.

What the Family Centre will do

- Provide access to help and support for families who are experiencing difficulties through the use of an Early Help Assessment
- Ensure policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding are in place and that staff understand and follow them to support the delivery of high quality care to children at all times.
- Ensure children are not placed at risk while in the charge of Family Centre staff.
- Deal with situations where children harm other children promptly and track behaviour through the Personal, Social and Emotional Development Policy.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times, only sharing information with relevant professionals to support the safeguarding of children.
- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding training every three years and ensure the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies receive training every two years and receive annual updates. All staff must complete Prevent Training and have an understanding of how to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and how to support parents who fear their child may be at risk of radicalisation.
- Provide Staff with the opportunity to discuss safeguarding and welfare concerns within the Centre through;
 - talking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy directly
 - discussions in their regular staff supervision
 - staff meetings - regular agenda item
 - Senior Management Team meetings – regular agenda item
- Ensure any breach of safeguarding policies and procedures are reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer and that the Early Start and Family Services Strategy and Service Manager is informed immediately.
- Make sure all staff within the Centre has the opportunity to raise any concerns they have regarding the delivery of services or the practice of a staff member. They can 'Whistleblow' internally, by reporting concerns to their line manager

or directly with BMBC via the Whistleblowing Policy, or externally with Ofsted following the Whistle blowing Procedure below.

- Ensure risk assessments are carried out as suggested in the Prevent Duty 2015.
- There will be a Designated Safeguarding Lead\Deputy identified within the Family Centre at all times. The names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead\Deputy from the Family Centres Management Team will be displayed within the Family Centre. There may be occasions when the Designated Safeguarding Deputy role is being carried out by a member of the wider Family Centre/ Early Start and Families Service.

Role of Designated Lead\Deputies

The Family Centre Manager is the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has ultimate lead responsibility for child protection; this responsibility cannot be delegated.

The Family Centre Manager must ensure they and their deputies have received Safeguarding training every two years and will access Prevent awareness training. In addition to formal training knowledge and skills will be refreshed annually via e-bulletins, meeting with other designated leads and taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments.

The Designated Lead can appoint one or more suitable deputies to support them in carrying out the following duties:

- Referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care/joint assessment team.
- Referring cases of suspected radicalisation to the Prevent Co-ordinator.
- Referring cases where a person is dismissed or has left the setting due to causing risk\harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Giving support, advice and guidance to all staff on an ongoing basis to encourage the early identification of the signs that children/families are experiencing difficulties that may result in a safeguarding or welfare concern being raised.

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- Notifying the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately if they are made aware of an allegation against staff/volunteer or student or breach of safeguarding policy or procedure following the 'Allegations Against a Member of Staff Policy' and taking any associated actions.
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and students undertake mandatory safeguarding training. This includes how to recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse and that all staff understands the relevant procedures to follow.