



## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

### Policy statement

Wise Owls Nursery School is fully committed to ensuring all children are kept safe and well and that they are protected from abuse and harm. We take all necessary steps to ensure staff are well trained and understand their duties, that all staff, students and volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that any concerns about a child's safety or welfare are acted upon without delay, following the Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures as per the local arrangements of the The Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP)

See full details here <https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/>.

At Wise Owls we recognise the signs and indicators that a child may be being abused. These include:

- **Physical Abuse:** This involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.
- **Emotional abuse:** Varying degrees of emotional abuse is present in virtually all child protection incidents, but can also constitute abuse in its own right. Emotional abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or torture causing, or likely to cause, severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or making them feel unnecessarily frightened or vulnerable.
- **Neglect:** Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill health. Neglect can also manifest itself in a failure to meet the basic emotional needs of child.
- **Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Witnessing this abuse amounts to emotional abuse.



- **Female Genital Mutilation:** Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. See further information toward end of policy.
- **Child Sexual exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

## Procedure

### Staff Responsibilities

- Each individual member of staff has a duty, and is expected to share Wise Owls commitment, to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- This duty includes a requirement to whistle-blow if they have any safeguarding concerns or witness or learn about anything that puts a child at risk (see Whistle Blowing Procedure for Staff, Students and Volunteers in Handbook).
- Staff must attend training and supervisions and ensure they read and implement all policies.
- All staff must be alert to possible signs of abuse and neglect and respond to any concerns they identify - usually this means reporting the matter to the named officers Laura Bryson or Alison Holdsworth without delay.
- Staff are also expected to disclose convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with Wise Owls.)
- Laura Bryson is the designated '**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**' for Wise Owls. She has the 'lead' responsibility for safeguarding children. She will lead training and support all other staff in understanding and meeting their responsibilities as well as liaising with parents, carers and agencies.
- Laura Bryson is supported by Alison Holdsworth and Kayleigh Crouch who are **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. (DDSL)**

### Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- We understand that abuse can take place in anywhere and involve a child or individuals from any family, background or culture – irrespective of whether they appear disadvantaged or not.
- We consider the following as possible signs of abuse or neglect:
  - Significant changes in children's behaviour
  - Deterioration in children's general well-being or appearance
  - Unexplained bruising or marks (including scratches, bite-marks or burns)

- Children's comments or behaviour which give cause for concern, including disclosure, (see below *Recording Disclosures*) inappropriate role-play or language
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff – for example sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images (See below *Allegations against staff*)
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's Key Person or appropriate staff member must complete a **Cause for Concern form** as a dated record of the details of the concern. This is shared and discussed promptly, without delay, with Laura Bryson the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The DSL decides what response is appropriate using the **Children's Services Threshold document**. A hard copy of this is available in the Safeguarding folder in the locked cabinet in the office. If a staff member feels that the cause for concern has not been dealt with effectively by the DSL then staff can discuss concerns with FDFP directly who will advise accordingly.

Records of incidents are stored in the safeguarding chronology file which is locked in the draw in the office.



If we have immediate concerns about a child's safety we notify the Front Door for Families (formerly the MASH) on (01273) 290400, email [FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**In an emergency, when a child is deemed to be in imminent danger, we notify the police by calling 999.**

We share information and co-operate fully with any investigation and attend any multi-agency meetings arranged by The Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP).

### **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

When a child makes a comment to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), that member of staff:

- listens to the child
- does not ask leading questions;
- gently clarifies understanding;
- offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
- makes a prompt, accurate written record (typically a Cause for Concern Form) 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 (witnesses) at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the safeguarding chronology file which is kept securely and confidentially. Concerns are then referred to as explained above.

### **Informing & Supporting parents**

- When appropriate, concerns are discussed with a parent or carer who is normally the first point of contact.
- DSL assesses whether it is 'appropriate' to speak to the parent about concerns (e.g. whether doing so is necessary to safeguard the child from any potential harm.)
- If a concern or suspicion of abuse is recorded and a referral to FDFP made, parents are informed via telephone or a face-to-face meeting, at the same time as the referral is made. If a parent/carer refuses consent for a referral then the DSL reserves the right to make a referral without consent via FDFP.
- Wise Owls may decide NOT to inform the parents, in accordance with the guidance of The Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP), if it is considered that informing the parent may potentially put the child at further risk.
- In these cases, it is the decision of the social services team as to whether or when parents are informed.
- We provide on-going support to parents involved in any investigation, as appropriate.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- We work within the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP) guidelines.
- We follow any Child Protection Plans or actions agreed during Case Conferences as well as any other reasonable requests.
- We have procedures for contacting FDFP 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 Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.



## **Allegations against staff**

We ensure that all parents and staff know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff, students or volunteers within Wise Owls. (See Whistle Blowing Policy / Disciplinary Procedures in the Handbook). In the event that an allegation is made:

This may include an allegation of abuse.

- The allegation should be referred to the designated safeguarding Lead (Laura Bryson) or in her absence, Alison Holdsworth or Kayleigh Crouch who will take necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child and any other child who may be at risk.
- If the allegation relates to the DSL, please refer to the secondary DSL (Alison Holdsworth or Kayleigh Crouch)
- The allegation will be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer Darrel Clews, Safeguarding Team, Children's Services, Moulsecoomb Hub North Building, Hodshrove Lane, Brighton, BN2 4SB

**Tel:** 01273295643    **Mobile:** 07795335879

- The allegation will also be reported to Front Door for Families
- The allegation will be reported to Ofsted within 14 days
- If there is an immediate risk to the child, the police will be contacted.
- The staff within the nursery will not seek to investigate the matter for themselves
- The nursery will follow advice from the LADO as to whether the member of staff should be suspended pending the final outcome of any investigation
- Parents will be informed as soon as possible and kept updated on the progress of any investigation as per the advice of the LADO
- If the member of staff concerned leaves their employment at the nursery before the investigation is concluded, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service immediately

## **Confidentiality**

- 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 Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP)
- Parents and staff involved in any investigation **MUST** ensure confidentiality.

## **Outcomes of an investigation**

Below are the possible outcomes of an investigation and some information regarding our likely response in each case. Each case of allegation is viewed on an individual basis, our main point of contact and advice would be provided by the LADO.

- **Substantiated** – there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. In this circumstance, the LADO would refer the case to social care for consideration. The Police would also be involved. We would no longer be able to employ the member of staff and would seek to dismiss them as per our disciplinary procedure. We would inform the DBS with immediate effect.



- Malicious – sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there is a deliberate act to deceive. We would refer the matter to the police if the allegation has been deliberately invented. The nursery may also need to refer the child to social services as a ‘child in need’
- False – sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation. In this instance the nursery may need to refer the child to social services as a ‘child in need’
- Unsubstantiated – insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. This term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence. In this circumstance, we would follow our disciplinary procedure and decide whether the nursery can reasonably continue to employ the member of staff. We would also inform the DBS of the outcome.

### **Disciplinary action**

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the DBS so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

### **Training**

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to identify and understand the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they know how to respond appropriately, confidentially and without delay. All staff must attend a Safeguarding Course and refresh every three years.
- All staff receive training on how to whistle-blow if they have concerns regarding a colleague. (See Handbook)

### **Curriculum**

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our planning to promote the personal, social and emotional development (PSED) of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of their rights, why and how to keep safe e.g. safe touch.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.
- We create 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.



### **Support to families**

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families. This process begins with our home visit/settling procedures prior to a new family starting with us.
- We make clear to parents our 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 children's social care team. (See registration documents)
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.

### **Risk Assessment**

If staff have concerns for the welfare of a child they should contact the FDFF, Tel: 01273 290400, [FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### **Working in Partnership**

Our policy and practice meets the requirements and recommendations of Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership (BHSCP).

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and is dealt with under Wise Owls safeguarding and child protection policy. The UK government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states:

'FGM is a grave violation of human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practiced on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the convention on the Rights of the Child'.

'Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they are at risk of undergoing FGM. UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerian and Eritreans. However, women from non- African communities that are also at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women.'



Indications that a child is at risk from FGM:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM- especially if there is an elderly lady present.
- In a conversation a child may talk about FGM
- A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony.
- A child may express concern/anxieties about a forthcoming holiday to their country of origin.
- Parents/Carers request permission for absence overseas or Wise Owls is made aware that the family are travelling for holiday's for a substantial amount of time.
- If a woman has already gone FGM- and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any child protections implications e.g. for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to Social Care of the Police if appropriate.

If we have any concerns at Wise Owls about children being at risk or victims of FGM then we refer to FDFP.

### **Intimate care**

Staff should provide intimate care in the nappy changing stations which are positioned discretely within the learning environment. These are away from windows (which are also covered in a film to enable children to see out but stop people looking in.)

No adult should be left alone with a child while providing intimate care in the learning environment and toilet area.

Staff should ensure that children have access to privacy when receiving intimate care for example when having their nappy or soiled/wet clothes changed.

Please refer to lone worker risk assessment.

### **Babysitting**

As stated in the Babysitting Policy, Wise Owls is not responsible for any private arrangements or agreements between staff and families from the setting. Any safeguarding concerns brought to the attention of staff when working at the family's home will need to be reported directly to FDFP by the staff member.

### **Mobile phones and cameras**

Please refer to mobile phone policy and Email and Internet document in Handbook.

### **July 2018 Refer to Prevent Duty statement and Policy.**

General safeguarding principles apply to keeping children safe from the risk of radicalization as set out in the relevant statutory guidance working together to safeguard children.





### **Physical intervention/positive handling**

Please refer to Behaviour policy.

### **Anti bullying**

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy.

**Health and Safety** – Visitors to the nursery setting will not be authorised to observe children's personal self-care, eg toileting and nappy changing.

### **Corona Virus (Covid 19 Annex)**

Working arrangements with children's social workers and the LEA or Health visitors should take place via phone conversations or zoom.

### **Linked Policies**

- Whistle-Blowing Procedure for Staff
- Babysitting policy
- Visitor Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

### **To be used in Conjunction with the following Nursery Forms, Documents & Resources**

- Child Protection Quiz; Incident Form;
- Application Form; Job Descriptions & Person Specifications; Interview Questions
- Cause for Concern Form, Incident Form;
- Visitor Book
- Annual declaration and staff suitability declaration forms

### **To be reviewed in line with the following:**

- Safeguarding Children – Guidance for all Childcare Providers (revised May 2011)
- <https://www.bhscp.org.uk>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2013)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006



Front Door for Families	(01273) 290400  Telephone 01273 290400 during working hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday and 9.00am to 4.30pm on Fridays).  Outside of our working hours please contact the Emergency Duty Service on 01273 335905 or 01273 335906.
Local Area Designated Officer – Darrell Clews	<b>Tel:</b> 01273295643 <b>Mobile:</b> 07795335879
Sussex Police	01273 475432
Ofsted General helpline	0300 123 1231
NSPCC child protection helpline – 24-hour helpline for people worried about a child	0808 800 5000
Local Family Information Service	01273 293545