

Safeguarding Children Policy (Updated Mar '23)

Clare Williams is the group's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and Pam Grosvenor is the Deputy DSL.

Aims

We aim to provide a secure and happy environment with the staff working as a team to provide the best possible care for each individual child. In all matters of safeguarding our primary focus will always be on the child, but we recognise the needs of the whole family; parents/carers and siblings, and the needs of any members of staff involved. We also endeavour to support families/children/staff with any mental health issues. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Providers must have regard to the Government's Statutory guidance 'Working together to Safeguard Children':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

We are aware that a child, or adult, may exhibit or disclose something that causes us concern at any time, and we recognise that correct procedures for reporting concerns or suspicions must be followed by all staff and volunteers.

All members of staff and volunteers working at Little Acorns have been DBS (formally CRB) checked. We ask that our staff attend on-going training for Safeguarding. We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms. Some of these signs may include inappropriate language, play or behaviour, change of behaviour, failure to thrive or physical injuries. Staff have further guidelines regarding safeguarding issues including signs of abuse in their Staff Handbook.

We are aware that each circumstance will be unique and whilst some concerns require immediate action to ensure the safety of a child, others may require practitioners to observe and monitor a child's well-being over a period of time.

Concerns

Where staff have a concern about a child's development, welfare or wellbeing, the DSL Clare Williams or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead will be informed. We will seek to communicate well with the parent/carer to information gather, and complete a 'Running Record', which will be filed in the Safeguarding File under Early Help. The DSL Clare Williams or Deputy DSL Pam Grosvenor will oversee this. If it is considered inappropriate to speak with the parents regarding the concern, case reasons will be given on the 'Running Record'. All staff will be made aware of these concerns, and it will be discussed at the weekly staff meeting on a need-to-know basis.

We seek to identify and respond to needs as early as possible, with strategies and support, to prevent escalation and protect families from further damage being caused.

We aim to seek the advice and help of other working professionals to access services and support, with parental consent, if this is deemed appropriate, such as **Health Visitors** the **Early Help Hub** 01305 224379 or **Home Start** 01258 473038. All communication is recorded on a **Running Record** form.

In the event of a member of staff experiencing more immediate and pressing concerns about a child's welfare; a **Record of Concern Form** will be completed, and Clare Williams (DSL) will be informed. The form is stored in the Safeguarding File and we will seek further advice.

If a social worker is already involved with the child, we will contact them through the social work team for their area, which can be found on the list at the front of the Safeguarding File. To report concerns about a child who does **not** already have a social worker, we will contact the Children's Advice & Duty Service (ChAD) (for professionals only) Tel: 01305 228558.

If families or members of the public have a concern, they can contact CHAD Tel: 01305 228866.

Parents/carers will be notified unless this is likely to put the child at risk. All discussions will be recorded using a set format.

Following the telephone referral, the Social Care Duty Officer will discuss the information provided by us with a Social Care manager. A decision will be made by the Social Care manager on what course of action will be taken. If the information provided indicates that a service is not required from Social Care, the referral will be recorded as a 'contact' and the family informed. If it appears that a service from Social Care might be required, an Initial Assessment will be completed, and the family and child will be visited by a Social Worker/Social Work Assistant.

Immediate Risk/Disclosure

If a child discloses about child abuse or a child is felt to be at immediate and significant risk of harm, **any** staff member has a duty of care to immediately contact Children's Advice and Duty Service (for professionals only) on 01305 228558, or the Police (999; 01747 852231; Out of hours: 01202 222222).

The staff member will report the disclosure as soon as possible to Clare Williams (DSL) and record the disclosure immediately and accurately.

Whistle Blowing

At Little Acorns we provide a safe working environment for staff to voice concerns without fear of jeopardising their job (see Staffing Policy on Supervision). Staff are aware of signs of inappropriate behaviour in adults working with children and know how to respond in order to safeguard children.

If a staff member felt that their concern was not being dealt with, then they are able to report their concern directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Martha Sharp Tel: 01305 221122.

Where to find Advice

You can find helpful advice on child abuse concerns in the 'What to do if you're worried' Government publication <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Staff supervision

Staff have supervision meetings with the manager every term. During the supervision there is opportunity to discuss the requirements to disclose any convictions, reprimands or court orders relating to them or a person they live with, which may affect suitability to work. Staff also fill in annual forms for declaration of any changes in their personal life and a self-assessment medical form.

Managing Allegations

If an allegation was made against a member of staff or volunteer; Clare Williams and the church Trustees (employers) would be informed immediately and Ofsted (Tel: 0300 123 1231) would be notified as well as the Local Authority Designated Officer-Martha Sharp Tel: 01305 221122.

If the allegation was against the DSL, then Caroline Watkins (the DSL for Father's House Church) would be informed and would then take over the required proceedings.

The member of staff/volunteer would be suspended whilst investigations were taking place. Consideration would be made as to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children. We would follow the guidance of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (previously known as our Local Safeguarding Children's Board) in order to investigate this complaint in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

IT equipment / e –safety

Andrew Baddeley is the E Safety Officer for Fathers House and Little Acorns Pre-School. He does termly security checks on the computer within the Pre-School room, updating as needed.

We safeguard digital copies of photos by ensuring that images are stored securely and are only accessed by authorised people. Digital images are kept for a limited time until those children in the photo are no longer at pre-school. A reputable online developer produces our photographs, and a copy of their data protection policy is available upon request.

Smartboard and computers

There is careful use of the internet to ensure no inappropriate images are available and only age-appropriate material shown.

Social Networking

In line with Government online safeguarding safety considerations for protecting professionals, it is recommended that staff do not accept friend requests or communications from learners or their family members (past or present). If there is a pre-existing relationship, staff must always respect our confidentiality policy. Staff are asked to act professionally on all networking sites.

Information sharing

The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) does not present a barrier to sharing information for the purposes of preventing serious harm to the mental or physical condition of any individual. For further details on information sharing go to the Information Commissioner's Office website at <http://ico.org.uk> . Data gathered from your grant form, including: contact details, attendance information and personal details such as your ethnic

group, any special educational needs and relevant medical information is shared with Dorset Council.

Prevent Duty – Jayne Lock is our ENCO (Equality Named Co-ordinator)

Our good practice promotes fundamental British Values. This involves promoting care and respect for each other; making each child feel unique and special; learning to recognise right from wrong e.g. having kind hands & kind words; encouraging individuality as well as acknowledging the voice of the whole group.

Staff are aware that as a provider we 'have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' and therefore need to identify who is vulnerable. As with any other risk, staff need to be alert to changes in children's behaviour and language - which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. We build good relationships with our families, so therefore would recognise a change of behaviour in a parent or would notice a parent who was isolated and needed support.

If we have any concerns, we will fill out a **Record of Concern Form** and contact;

Prevent Officer: Gary Thorpe 01202 229336

Email: preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk

Helpline re. Extremism: 020 7340 7264

Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Contact numbers:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Clare Williams

Tel: 01747 853715

Email: Littleacornspreschool9@gmail.com

IT & e-safety: Andrew Baddelely

Tel: 07947 538334, 01747 854993

Email: Andrew@fathershouseshaftesbury.co.uk

Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD)

(For professionals only): 01305 228558

Children's Service Authorities

North Dorset Local Office

(Safeguarding Children Child Protection)

Bath Road

Sturminster Newton

Dorset

DT10 1DR

Tel: 01258 472652

Out of hours: **01202 657279**

For Families or members of the public who have concerns contact:

CHAD: 01305 228866

LADO: Martha Sharp 01305 221122
email: LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Prevent Officer: Gary Thorpe 01202 229336
Email: preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk

Helpline re. Extremism: 020 7340 7264
Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
Police: 01747 852231
Out of hours: 01202 222222

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Please refer also to our other policies relating to child protection and safeguarding:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Hygiene Policy re. administration of medication and Intimate Care;
- Mobile phones and Camera Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy
- Emergency Procedures
- Record Keeping Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Safety Policy re. First Aid, Accident/Incident book and Risk Assessment;
- Staffing re. DBS checks