



Policy Document:

Safeguarding and Child Protection.

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This policy is based upon Cambridgeshire County Council Child Protection Model Policy Template (September 2022).



Introduction

The Meadows Day Care Centre fully recognises the responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Through their day-to-day contact with children and direct work with families, all staff, students and volunteers at the Centre have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and in referring them to the Designated Person (DP) for Child Protection. This policy sets out how the Centre complies with statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who attend the Centre.

The policy will be renewed, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

As a society we all have a duty to safeguard children but it is particularly important that those working or volunteering with children remain vigilant to the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. Staff, volunteers and students should be familiar with the safeguarding procedures within the setting and know how to respond to concerns about children or adults.

PREVENTION

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children. The Centre will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are actively listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the Centre whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

PROCEDURES

We will follow Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board procedures, which can be accessed online: <https://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/>. The Centre has regard for Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015 (Department for Education).

The Designated Person for Child Protection in the Centre is:

- **Yvonne Brown**

The following member of staff has also received the Designated Person for Child Protection training:

- **Tracy Ruscoe**

The Centre will:

- Ensure a trained DP is always available (during setting hours and wherever possible) for staff in the Centre to discuss any safeguarding concerns, access relevant records and take the necessary action.
- Ensure this training is updated every two years and in addition to the formal training DPs will refresh their knowledge and skills e.g., via bulletins, meetings or further reading at least

annually. Contingency arrangements will be put in place should the DP not be available (another DP will be on site).

- Recognise the importance of the role of the DP and ensure she/he has the time and training to undertake her/his duties.
- The DP has contact details for Cambridgeshire Children's Social Care and the Early Help Hub readily accessible for use when required. Bordering county Social Care and Early Help contact details are available, as required, for children who live outside of Cambridgeshire.

THE ROLES OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS.

All staff, committee members and volunteers will undertake appropriate safeguarding training at induction and receive regular updates on safeguarding (at least annually).

The Centre will ensure every member of staff:

- Knows the name of the DP and her/his role.
- Knows how to pass on and record concerns about a child.
- Knows that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using to relevant agencies as a matter of urgency if there is no DP present and/or they feel the child remains at risk of significant harm.
- Understands the Centre's policy on babysitting for families who attend the setting.
- Ensure they are fully aware of the Policies surrounding the areas of the use of Mobile phones, technology and Digital Photography and support the Centre in safeguarding children online.

The Centre will ensure that all staff attend basic child protection training or refreshers every three years at a minimum. New staff should attend this training as soon as possible depending on course availability.

Training made available must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond to these in a timely and appropriate way. These may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour.
- Deterioration in children's general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of abuse or neglect.
- Children's comments which give cause for concern.
- Pattern of absences or frequent absences
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the Centre for example in the child's home.
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children.

MANAGEMENT CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Management Committee fully recognises their responsibilities with regard to child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. They will:

- Designate a committee member (where applicable) for child protection who will monitor the Centre's child protection policy and practice and champion good practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding.
- Ensure that this policy is annually reviewed in conjunction with the Centre's DP's.
- Undertake a safeguarding briefing from the DP upon election.
- Individual committee members will comply on election with Ofsted suitability check requirements including undertaking a DBS check.
- Complete Safer Recruitment training (at least one person who has recruitment responsibility).

LIASON WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The Centre will:

- Work to develop effective links with relevant services to promote the safety and welfare of all children.
- Co-operate as required, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, with key agencies in their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance and providing written reports at child protection conferences and core groups.
- Notify the relevant Social Care Unit immediately if there is an unexplained absence or if there are any change in circumstances of a child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Notify the relevant Social Care team immediately if there are any further abuse or neglect concerns (such as fresh marks, bruises or injuries) where a child is already subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan. It will not be assumed that Social Care are already aware of these additional concerns.
- Respond to requests for information about children in the setting's care from the Education Navigator at the Multi-Agency safeguarding Hub (MASH) or a Social Worker in a timely manner.

RECORD KEEPING

The Centre will:

- Keep clear, detailed written records of concern about children's welfare using the Log of Concern Form. Records should include:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;
 - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
 - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- The Centre will ensure all records are kept secure and in a locked location.
- During registration of each new child, ask for information about other settings the child currently or previously attended. The DP will make contact to request relevant safeguarding and welfare information is shared. This will be ongoing where children attend more than one setting concurrently.
- Parents do not have an automatic right to access child welfare records and consideration will be given as to what the consequences of information sharing might be (in line with Information Sharing Guidance 2018).
- Unless it would place the child at risk of significant harm, parents will be informed that a Log of Concern Form has been completed, where it will be stored and what will happen to it when the child leaves the Centre.

WHEN A CHILD LEAVES OR MOVES TO ANOTHER SETTING

When the child about whom there have been child welfare concerns (whether subject to a child protection plan or not) leaves the Centre or transfers to setting, the child's child welfare file will be transferred to the receiving setting or setting using the following protocol:

- The file will be marked 'confidential, addressee only' and sent to the DP, if known, of the receiving setting or setting. The file will be delivered by hand if possible; otherwise sent by delivery that can be tracked and signed for.
- The Centre will contact the receiving setting/setting by telephone to make them aware that there is a child welfare file and, once sent, ask them to confirm as soon as possible that they have received the file. The Centre will keep a record that the file has been received in order to be able to identify its location.
- Parents will be made aware that child welfare records will be transferred, unless this would place the child at risk of acute harm.
- The Centre will not keep a copy of transferred records but will keep a record of the current file location and date the file was transferred.

- If individual child welfare files cannot be transferred for any reason, the Centre will archive them for 25 years from the child's date of birth.
- All actions and decisions will be led by what is considered to be in the best interests of the child.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The DP will be guided by the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' July 2018.

Fears about sharing information will not stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect. The UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe:

- 'Information will be shared legally without consent, if the DP or a member of staff is unable to or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk.'
- relevant personal information will be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.'

(Information Sharing, July 2018, Page 5)

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE SHARED

When taking decisions about what information to share, the DP will consider how much information they need to release and the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information should be proportionate to the need and level of risk. Only information that is relevant to the purposes will be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make informed decisions.

Information sharing decisions must be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom. If the decision is not to share, the DP will record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the person requesting the information.

If a child discloses information that may indicate that they are at risk of abuse or neglect, the staff member will be clear that they cannot promise to keep the information a secret. The staff member will be honest with the child and explain that it will be necessary to tell someone else in order to help them and to keep them safe.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The Centre will:

- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency, *unless the circumstances may put the child at further risk of harm*. If in any doubt, staff will seek advice from Social Care as required.
- Contact Children's Social Care first if the setting believes that notifying parents about a safeguarding concern may place the child or another person at immediate risk of harm or prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. Further guidance on this can be found in the '*Effective Support for Children and Families in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough document*'.

- Ensure that all parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the Centre and staff for safeguarding and child protection by ensuring that they receive a copy of this policy when registering their child at the Centre.
- Record on the log of concern form what discussions have taken place with parents and if a decision was made not to discuss the matter with parents, the reason why not (circumstances may include if the DP is unable to or cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if gaining consent could place a child at risk of harm such as potential physical or sexual abuse).

SUPPORTING THE CHILD AT RISK

We recognise that any child may be subject to abuse or witness abuse and that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Children may also find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and trust those around them. Some children may adopt inappropriate or abusive behaviours and that these children may be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The Centre will endeavour to support the child through:

- Activities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- An ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment that values people.
- A behaviour policy aimed at supporting all children. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the child but does not damage the child's sense of self-worth. The Centre will ensure that the child knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but she/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies which support the child and family such as Social Care and District Teams.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.
- Recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic abuse/violence, mental ill-health or substance misuse may be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.
- Monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and seeking advice or making a referral to other agencies, e.g., Social Care, when necessary.

Children of Substance Misusing Parents/Carers

Misuse of drugs and/or alcohol is strongly associated with Significant Harm to children, especially when combined with other features such as domestic violence.

When the Centre receives information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers they will follow appropriate procedures. This is particularly important if the following factors are present:

- *Use of the family resources to finance the parent's dependency, characterised by inadequate food, heat and clothing for the children.*
- *Children exposed to unsuitable caregivers or visitors, e.g., customers or dealers.*
- *The effects of alcohol leading to an inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour.*
- *Chaotic drug and alcohol use leading to emotional unavailability, irrational behaviour and reduced parental vigilance.*
- *Disturbed moods as a result of withdrawal symptoms or dependency.*
- *Unsafe storage of drugs and/or alcohol or injecting equipment.*
- *Drugs and/or alcohol having an adverse impact on the growth and development of the unborn child.*

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family

members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

The Centre recognises that where there is Domestic Abuse in a family, the children/young person will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships. Where there are concerns regarding Domestic Abuse, the Centre will seek advice from the relevant agencies and follow child protection procedures.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Additional Needs

Statistically, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are most vulnerable to abuse. Centre practitioners who support children with SEND will use their knowledge of the individual child to ensure that signs and indicators of abuse are recognised and acted upon quickly & sensitively. Children who have difficulty with expressive language may be particularly vulnerable to abuse so practitioners will be alert to changes in behaviour and other possible signs of abuse.

Staff supervision will be vigilant to create a protective ethos around the child.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This can include sexual bullying, being coerced to send sexual images, sexual assault and teenage relationship abuse. There are clear links with sexual exploitation and domestic abuse.

This form of abuse will not be tolerated and victims will be appropriately supported. Any indication that a child has suffered from peer-on-peer abuse will be dealt with under the child protection procedures outlined in this policy.

Consideration will always need to be given to the welfare of both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) in these situations.

Prevention of Radicalisation

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. The Centre is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

The Counter-terrorism and Security Act, 2015 places a duty on authorities 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Centre staff are made aware of this duty.

If any member of staff has concerns that a child or young person or adult may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the DP who will seek the appropriate advice and make a Prevent referral if required.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, drugs, alcohol, gifts or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Exploitation is marked out by an imbalance of power in the relationship and involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation and sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.

If CSE is suspected, the Centre will complete a Log of Concern form and make a referral to Social Care.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation includes procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is carried out on children between the ages of 0–15, depending on the community in which they live. FGM is extremely harmful and has short- and long-term effects on physical and psychological health.

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, and is illegal in most countries, including the UK.

The Centre takes these concerns seriously and staff will be made aware of the possible signs and indicators that may alert them to the possibility of FGM. There is statutory duty for professionals in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police. (Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation, April 2016).

Where there is a concern about a child in relation to FGM the Centre will contact children's social care. If the concerns are based on more concrete evidence, i.e., the young person says this is going to happen to them or that it has happened to them or a sister, the Centre will report this to the police.

Online Safety

It is important that children and young people receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and are able to recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world.

Terms such as 'e-safety', 'online', 'communication technologies' and 'digital technologies' refer to all fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their well-being.

The issues can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

Best practice:

- **Whole Centre approach** – staff recognise and are aware of e-safety issues and the management team make online safety a priority; online safety.
- **Policies** – online safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – risk assessment is taken seriously and used to promote online safety. There are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to protect children from harmful online material.
- **Management of Personal Data** – data is managed securely and in accordance with the requirements of GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILDREN

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16, (under 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or relative in their own home for 28 days or more. The Centre will follow the mandatory duty to inform the Local Authority of any 'Private Fostering' arrangements and refer to the Specialist Fostering Team.

PROMOTING A PROTECTIVE ETHOS

The Centre will create an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and they are listened to. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- All staff, including the DPs, are trained regularly to ensure skills and knowledge are up-to-date.
- Staff know how to respond to child protection concerns.

- Contribution to an inter-agency approach to child protection by working effectively and supportively with other agencies.
- Raising children's awareness and actively promoting self-esteem building, so that children have a range of strategies and contacts to ensure their safety.
- Using personal safety programmes, such as Protective Behaviours, NSPCC PANTS campaign.
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the Centre's responsibility to the welfare of the children.
- Ensuring the relevant policies are in place, i.e., the use of mobile phones and cameras, behaviour management, intimate care, whistle-blowing, social networking.
- Being vigilant to the inappropriate behaviour of staff or adults working with children and ensuring that all staff and volunteers know the allegations procedure
- Staff acting as positive role models to children and young people.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the need to maintain appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with children and parents/carers in line with the Centre's staff code of conduct/behaviour policy.

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

The Centre has a duty to ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements for their role. The Centre will follow safer recruitment practices including verifying qualifications and ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken. The Centre will not allow people, whose suitability has not been checked, to have unsupervised contact with children.

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the Centre).

The Committee member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment training is:

- **John R. Smith – Chairman** (March 2023)

The Staff members who have undertaken Safer Recruitment training are:

- **Yvonne Brown – Manager** (March 2023)
- **Lea Hodges – Deputy Manager** (March 2023)

Disqualification By Association (DBA)

The guidance concerning disqualification by association as defined by the Child Care Act 2006, was updated on 31st August 2018. The revised guidance states that Disqualification by Association will only apply on domestic premises. Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 still applies to staff themselves. The Centre will no longer ask or hold information about the cautions or convictions of someone living or working in their household.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE, 2018) paragraph 116 also refers to disqualification:

“For staff who work in childcare provision or who are concerned with the management of such provision, the school needs to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.”

(Employment and Recruitment policy.)

WHISTLEBLOWING

The Centre has a separate whistle-blowing policy which aims to help and protect both staff and children by:

- Preventing a problem getting worse;
- Safeguarding children and young people;
- Reducing the potential risks to others.

The earlier a concern is raised, the easier and sooner it is possible for the Centre to take action. All staff are aware of the setting's whistle-blowing policy and are encouraged to feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with all staff, students and volunteers. If a person working with children at the Centre believes that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately by the Centre, they should report the matter to LADO.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST ADULTS WHO WORK OR VOLUNTEER IN THE CENTRE

All allegations of abuse of children by those working whether paid or unpaid, at the Centre will be taken seriously. The following procedure will be followed if there is an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way which indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind. **They should not:**

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification;
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations;
- Promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following action will be taken (as per the 'Allegations of Abuse against Adults who Work or Volunteer in a Childcare Setting' flowchart and guidance displayed in the office):

- The Centre will ensure the immediate safety of the children.
- The Centre will **not** start to investigate and will immediately contact the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- **Local authority designated team: LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk 01223 727967**
- The Early Years Safeguarding Manager will discuss the case with the LADO, who will decide if it could be a child protection case.
- If the LADO decides the matter is a child protection case, external/internal agencies (e.g., police) will be informed by the LADO and the Centre will act upon the advice given to ensure that any investigation is not jeopardised.
- The setting will seek advice from LADO, the police or Children's social care about how much information might be disclosed to the accused person in the first instance.
- Confidentiality must be maintained and the setting will guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.
- The Centre will notify Ofsted of an allegation of abuse.
- It may be necessary for the employer to suspend the alleged perpetrator. Suspension is a neutral act to allow a thorough and fair investigation.
- If it is agreed that the matter is not a child protection case, the Centre will investigate the matter, gaining HR advice if required.

The setting will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the setting and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant agencies, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and included in references where applicable.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Children's Social Care:

Contact Centre (for telephone referrals)..... 0345 045 5203

Emergency Duty Team (out of office hours)..... 01733 234 724

Early Help Hub 01480 376 666

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01223 727 967

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

Senior Advisor Intervention and Safeguarding 01223 714 760
(Gemma Hope)

Early Years Service..... earlyyears.service@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Safeguarding Flowchart

