

THE LEARNING TREE DAY NURSERY CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and protective care.

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document
'Working together to safeguard children')*

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

At The Learning Tree we will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self image.
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children.
- Always listen to children.

Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the nursery manager/area manager or nursery owner at the earliest opportunity.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children can confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of updates when they occur.
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions.

Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

WE WILL -

- We will always tell any child protection agency (Usually local children's services or the police) previously identified by the local safeguarding children board (LSCB), without delay, about any allegations of abuse.
- Inform Ofsted of any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations. We will inform Ofsted of these allegations as soon as reasonably possible, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Ensure when recording we are factual, we use the children's own words in cases where a disclosure is made. If a staff member has a concern regarding the welfare or well-being of a child a concern form will be completed.
- If a staff member had a concern **it must** be reported to the child protection officers **Samantha Coakley and Jessica Baxter** in detail. The designated person will then make a professional judgment about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with the local safeguarding children's board procedures.
- If a referral is made to children's social care or the police, a written note or a copy of the children's social care referral form (C2) must be forwarded to children's social care within **48 hours**.
- Ensure confidentiality when sharing child protection information.

- If we have a concern about a child we will share these concerns with the parents/ carers. However, if sharing these concerns puts the child at risk of significant or further harm we will seek advice from the social care team.

Contact telephone numbers:

If you are not sure whether to refer a child you can get advice from the referral and assessment team:

Children and families assessment intervention team (CAFAIT)

01225 396312

01225396313

Ofsted: 0300 123 4666

Local Authority Designated Officer LADO – Jackie Deas – 01225 396810

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance – 01225 396974

Out of hours emergency team – 01454 615165

Police – public protection unit – Duty Desk – 01225 842786

If a child or young person is immediate danger then please dial 999 and ask for police assistance.

Types of abuse:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Physical abuse:

Action needs to be taken if staff have a reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during their time at nursery, will be recorded as soon as they are noticed by a staff member on a pre nursery accident form.
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity.

- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in the local authority will be notified.
- **Jessica Baxter** – safeguarding officer will review the accident/ incident forms monthly to monitor any patterns

Fabricated illness:

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Sexual abuse:

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing, the procedure stated later in this policy under 'recording of abuse' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk.
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager and safeguarding officer.
- The matter will be referred to LSCB in the local authority.

Emotional abuse:

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or

carers placing inappropriate age developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through a child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the room leader and nursery manager.
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may need to be completed
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the LSCB in the local authority.

Neglect:

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of a child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes which may restrict a child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for the child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- Such concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- A CAF may need to be completed
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the LSCB in the local authority will be notified.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents and staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the nursery manager or Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation and disclosure
- **Exact** words spoken by the child
- **Exact** position and type of injuries or marks seen
- **Exact** observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with parent(s) (where deemed appropriate)

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the Manager, DSCO, dated and kept on a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important to ensure children understand that any disclosure they make will be treated sensitively but may need to be shared with other professionals if it is considered necessary to protect the child or someone else from harm. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the LSCB and Ofsted, and/or a Common Assessment Framework needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LSCB and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

Staffing and volunteering

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced DBS disclosure clearance.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basis child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and coordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery DPCP undertakes specific training and receives regular updates to developments within this field.

The Designated Person For Child Protection (DPCP) at the nursery is: **Jessica Baxter and Samantha Coackley**

- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out vetting checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- All enhanced DBS disclosures checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children.
- We ensure we received at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- All students will have enhanced DBS disclosures conducted on them before their placement starts.
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concerns.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- All contractors/external workers will not be allowed to work in the nursery whilst the children are present unless they have an enhanced DBS check. The manager will request this before allowing them access to the nursery during the day. All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas children use.
- All staff have access to a whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner.
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection concerns, training and any needs for further support, it also gives the opportunity to declare any convictions, cautions, court orders, warnings that have come into place that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child maybe endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating offers will inform the parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those **who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.**

Support to families

- The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery
- The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in their home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Employees or volunteers of the nursery – Allegations against a staff member

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the HM Government guidance in 'Working together to safeguard children'.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then they should be reported to the Deputy Manager and/or DPCP on duty instead.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance – Within 1 working day
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, LSCB and asks all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries, external investigations and interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (Police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery is also required to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of staff of the nursery who is affected by an allegation their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date disseminated to staff	Date for review