

Reflections Small School – Safeguarding Policy

Date: 1.9.16

Review Date: 1.9.17

Safeguarding of children

We have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and are committed to the protection of all children.

At Reflections Small School there is a designated Safeguarding Lead. All staff have been made aware of their responsibilities towards the protection of children and all staff undergo child protection training every three years.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities for liaison with Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) in any child protection situation.

Vetting of staff

To ensure all staff remain suitable to care for children, Reflections requires all staff to sign an 'employee disqualification' letter. This letter requests that employees disclose that:

- They don't reside with any person/s disqualified from caring for, or working with children
- They are not aware of any incident/investigation that may affect their criminal record status
- There is no issue with staff's residential status as residents in the UK

The Small School Management Team ensures that during the initial recruitment of staff they determine the applicant's knowledge of how best to safeguard children. Where an applicant with limited knowledge has been recruited we ensure they attend appropriate training without delay.

All staff, volunteers or students working in the Small School will be subject to checks by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The necessary forms are completed during the induction period. If the Small School has not received the new employee's disclosure number prior to their first day, the manager will deploy staff to ensure they are supervised at all times.

The Small School will have copies of the following available at all times:

- A local safeguarding children guide – e.g. "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused"
- Written child protection policy/procedure
- Child protection reporting flowchart (visible in all toileting and changing areas as well as the Small School office and staff room)

Further information relating to government legislation can be obtained at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>

Our role in Safeguarding

As educators, we all have responsibility in child protection matters. We have regular contact with the children in our Small School and form close relationships with them, we are therefore in a prime position to notice significant changes in their behaviour, their physical appearance and to listen and observe.

The following procedure is based on the booklet, 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' and in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures further information can be obtained at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-and-health-information-for-professionals/west-sussex-safeguarding-children-board/>

If a carer has concerns regarding a child's welfare:

- The carer discusses with the Small School Manager and designated safeguarding lead, informing the Small School Director of the discussions
- The carer completes a written record on the Child Protection Incident Form.
- If there are still concerns, the Small School Manager/Child Protection Co-ordinator will contact the Child's parents/guardian to seek their agreement to making a referral to Social Services and in line with child protection procedures; unless such a discussion would place the child at risk of significant harm.
- The Small School Manager/ designated safeguarding lead makes a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Ofsted, and then follows up in writing within 48 hours.

Important contact numbers are:

- Local Safeguarding Children Board – 0330 222 5296
- Ofsted Office – 0300 123 1231 110

Confidentiality

Child protection raises issues of confidentiality that are clearly understood by all staff. Information concerning children and families must only be shared with other professional bodies (for further clarification, please refer to the Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

Safeguarding - Basic Child Protection

As staff work closely with the children, they know them and therefore we are in a position to notice changes. It is important that staff share any information they think is relevant with the designated member of staff for child protection and the Small School Manager. All staff, at all times, are observing the children in their care and any concerns whether behavioural or physical are reported, including:

- Any unexplained bruising or marks,
- Comments children make that give you cause for concern,
- Any deterioration in a child's general well-being

Our policy is to always listen to what children say – and not to cross-examine them; and to never promise to keep a secret.

Categories of Child Abuse

There are four categories of Child Abuse:

- Physical
- Neglect
- Emotional
- Sexual

Our first responsibility is to the children in our care, this means that every member of staff needs to know about signs of abuse.

Examples below are what may become evident when we have young children in our care; these lists are a general overview and are by no means exhaustive. Any suspicions are noted and brought to the attention of the Manager and Child Protection Co-ordinators.

Possible signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries, or refusal to explain injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents (being contacted) i.e. changes in behaviour when seeing Parent/Guardians when they are contacted.
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home with parent/guardian when collecting
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others

Indicators of Neglect/Failure to Thrive:

- Health and Hygiene: Persistent poor attention to health needs cleanliness and physical care. Lack of essential medical and dental care.
- Food: Malnourished from mild forms to severe emaciation
- Safety: Inadequate supervision to prevent accidents/incidents
- Warmth: Inappropriate clothing
- Excessive responsibilities at home for younger children
- Continual thirst and hunger
- Alcohol or drug abuse by carers or child
- Failure to gain weight and height
- Poor skin, hair, nail conditions
- Fatigued and listless
- Unexplained/frequent absences

Indicators of Emotional Abuse/Psychological Maltreatment:

- Acts of Omission: persistent lack of affection or physical interaction. Lack of warmth, praise and pride towards child. Lack of response to child's overtures or distress. Persistent criticism – verbal abuse. Absence of discipline, control of behaviour and positive parenting
- Acts of Commission: Rejecting, scapegoating, derogation, humiliation, terrorising, victimisation. Isolation within and outside family. Encouragement of antisocial behaviour. Exploitation physically or sexually. Disassociation from child, poor parenting indicators.
- Behavioural Indicators -
 - Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, biting, withdrawal)
 - Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive)
 - Sleep disorders
 - Compliant/passive, aggressive/demanding, hyperactive
 - Developmental delays
 - Enuresis/encopresis (Bedwetting/Soiling)
 - Overly adaptive behaviour – inappropriate adult/child indicators
 - Role reversal
 - Frozen watchfulness

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

- Become insecure or cling to a parent in a fearful way
- Show extreme fear or cry hysterically when their nappy is changed
- Become hysterical when clothing is removed, particularly underclothes
- Have some physical signs in the genital or anal areas, smell of semen etc.
- Have soreness or bleeding in the throat, anal or genital areas
- Regress to a much younger behavioural pattern
- Behave in a way sexually inappropriate to their age, being obsessed with sexual matters, as opposed to normal exploration. Practitioners need to be aware of the 'hidden' areas in and around the Small School.
- Stare blankly, seem unhappy, confused or sad
- Become withdrawn, stop eating, have chronic nightmares, bed wetting again when previously dry
- Play out sexual acts in too knowledgeable a way with dolls or other children
- Produce drawings of sex organs such as erect penises
- Stop enjoying experiences with other children, such as stories or games
- Seem to be bothered or worried, but won't tell why as if keeping a secret
- Change from being happy and active to being withdrawn and fearful
- Repeat obscene words or phrases said by the abuser
- Say repeatedly that they are bad, dirty or wicked
- Become aggressive and hurtful
- Act in sexually inappropriate way towards adults

Suspected Breach of Child Protection in the Small School

If there is suspicion the following procedures must be followed:

- Speak to the Small School Manager and designated Safeguarding Lead, STRICT confidentiality must be observed at all times, the incident is not for general discussion with ANYONE.
- Record all information as fully and accurately as possible on the 'child protection incident record' form.
- Monitor the child throughout the day.
- The Small School Manager/ designated Safeguarding Lead /Ofsted/Social Services will invoke the Child Protection Procedures.

Safeguarding - Whistle Blowing Policy Statement

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the company's approach to whistleblowing.

All staff at the Small School are encouraged to raise any genuine concerns about any malpractice, suspected crime, breach of legal obligations, miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, financial malpractice, fraud, corruption and breach of company regulations, or any cover up of these, that they may come across, which affects the Small School, its children or staff. In your place of work:

Staff should not hesitate to raise issues in connection with suspected or actual malpractice. All staff have statutory protection in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013, provided that concerns are raised in the right way and they are acting in good faith. The fear of being mistaken should not prevent a member of staff from raising their concerns, provided they are acting in good faith, and have a reasonably held suspicion. All staff who have a reasonably held suspicion, who raise concerns in the right way and are acting in good faith will be protected from reprisal or victimization and will not be risking their job security.

The types of disclosure that this policy is intended to cover include the following:

- A criminal offence
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Endangering the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Financial malpractice, including fraud, theft and corruption
- Concealment of information relating to any of the above

Staff who fail to follow this procedure and knowingly withhold information or evidence on any of the above occurrences or areas may be subject to disciplinary action, or to criminal proceedings in the event of a criminal investigation.

If concerned about any form of malpractice or any of the areas listed above staff should first raise the issue with the Manager. In cases where staff do not feel that they can tell their Manager, for whatever reason, they may raise the matter with the Director.

Safeguarding – Procedure for allegations of abuse against those who provide childcare

Any member of staff who hears about or observes a situation in which a child may have suffered significant harm (either on the Small School premises or elsewhere) by another member of the staff team must adhere to the following procedure:

- Report the incident immediately to the Small School Manager or the Senior in Charge.
- The member of staff who is reporting the incident must give the Manager a full and detailed description of the incident. The Manager should take the necessary steps to ensure what is being reported is reliable and is a serious allegation of child abuse.
- The Manager will ensure that all members of staff involved keep the matter confidential.
- The member of staff who reported the incident must complete a full written report of the incident. They must use the Child Protection Incident Record Form. The report must be completed at the time the concern is reported.
- The Manager must ensure that there is a full understanding of what is being reported. The Manager should only speak to the child if this is absolutely necessary and further evidence is required. No staff should ask the child any leading questions.
- The Manager should consult with the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator in the Small School and a Director to establish that what is being reported is either a child protection matter; or a work performance matter and contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice (see Sussex Child Protection Procedure flow chart)
- In making this determination, the Manager should rely on their judgement and experience.
- If uncertainty exists in making the determination the Local Social Services Emergency Duty Team should be called and a decision made to determine whether the member of staff who is subject of the allegation should be removed immediately from the care of the child in question.
- At this stage, when speaking with the Officer from Local Safeguarding Children's Board, it must be clearly explained that we are seeking advice in relation to an allegation of child abuse. The Local Services Child Protection Team will determine, from the information given, if the matter requires inter-agency involvement and or investigation. The situation should be explained clearly and the advice given should be followed.

Worthing Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSBC) Contact Number: 0330 222 5296 And say you are Dealing with a Child Protection Matter

Child protection matters are extremely serious, not only for the child but also for the member of staff. They can end the career of the person who is the subject of the allegation and they can also result in criminal proceedings.

If, and only if, the Manager has been advised that it is a child protection matter, then:

- The Manager when making the referral to the Emergency Duty Team at Social Services they should explain they wish to follow the next steps in this policy. The Manager should explain what these points are and verify that it is ok to do so.
- The Manager will immediately inform the member of staff who has allegedly caused the child protection concern that they have been suspended without prejudice on full pay whilst a full investigation is carried out. This will be done in accordance in line with the Small School disciplinary procedures.
- The member of staff should be informed that their suspension relates to an allegation of child abuse. The nature of the allegation should not be disclosed at this stage.
- This must be done on the same day the incident has taken place or the next working day if this is not possible. If the member of staff is on annual leave or is not in the Small School for any other reason, they will be informed immediately upon their return to work.
- The Manager will report the matter to Ofsted (and in writing within 48 hrs).
- The parents of the child in question must be called by the Manager and asked to meet with them to discuss the matter. Unless directed otherwise by LSCB, this should be done within 24 hours of the incident being reported.
- A thorough investigation must take place. Guidance from LSCB should be sought in relation to the investigation.
- On conclusion of the investigation, the staff member will be informed of the outcome.
- The confidentiality of the person who is the subject of the investigation should not be breached.
- Parents who may not be satisfied at the conclusion should be informed of their rights and the complaints procedure.

Investigations which show Child Abuse occurred

- If the investigation proved the staff member was guilty of Child Abuse, guidance from LSCB and any other external bodies would be sought in determining the best way to deal with the situation. It is possible the matter may take criminal proceedings and the Small School will co-operate fully with these proceedings.
- If criminal proceedings are not initiated, the Small School will comply with any recommendations made by external bodies involved in the matter.
- There are instances in which the member of staff's name should be referred to the Secretary of State for possible inclusion on the PoCA list. Referrals should only be made to the Secretary of State by the Small School Director.

Investigations which show Child Abuse DID NOT occur

- It may be determined that disciplinary action needs to be taken against the member of staff as a result of the findings of the investigation. If this is so, it will be done in accordance with the Small School disciplinary procedure.
- If no disciplinary action is taken, the member of staff will be informed that no further action will be taken under Child Protection or Disciplinary procedures.
- The Manager must ensure that the member of staff records his/her version of events, including names of witnesses and dates.
- The Manager must consider whether the member of staff requires counselling advice.
- The Manager must inform all relevant parties of the outcome of the investigation.

- The Manager should also consider the need for counselling and support for all relevant parties.
- The Manager must consider the implications for the child and the member of staff for their future relationship and provide advice and support as necessary.
- The Manager should record that an allegation was made against that member of staff, and should include the reasons for the conclusion into the investigation and that the allegation was unfounded. A copy of the record should be sent to the Designated Officer in LSBC within 3 working days of the decision not to proceed. A copy of the record should also be sent to Ofsted showing how the matter was handled and its outcome.

Dealing with a Work Performance Matter (which was alleged as a Child Protection concern)

At the outset the Manager will have determined (through the correct channels) that what was being alleged as a Child Protection concern was a Work Performance matter.

The Manager needs to use their discretion to determine the seriousness of the incident and take appropriate actions. Any member of staff who is accused of malpractice in the workplace should be investigated through the proper channels.

If there is any reason to believe the child in question might have suffered any harm whatsoever, the Manager should inform the parents that day. This should be done when they come to collect the child at the Small School.

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated depending on the seriousness of the situation. The Manager should inform the Small School Director of the incident.

Safeguarding - Anti-Radicalisation Policy Statement

Reflections Small School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all the children attending the setting. As a Small School, we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. The Anti-radicalisation policy sets out our beliefs, strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised or exposed to extremism, by identifying who is vulnerable and providing them with support.

Definitions & Indicators

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind. Extremism is defined as holding of extreme political or religious views.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group
- Their day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause.

- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause
- Communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology.
- Using insulting derogatory names for another group
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person – these may include physical or verbal assault, provocative behaviour, damage to property, derogatory name calling, possession of prejudice-related materials, prejudice related ridicule or name calling, inappropriate forms of address, refusal to co-operate, attempts to recruit to prejudice-related organisations, condoning or supporting violence towards others.

If concerned about any child, family or member of staff within the Small School falling prey to any aspect of the above then you should first raise the issue with the Designated Safeguarding Officer within the Small School setting.