

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The full document below outlines all the ways in which we safeguard children.

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 effective care.*

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children' 2010)

The designated safeguarding officers at the Swan Nursery are Michelle Bowgen and Liz Thacker. The designated deputy safeguarding officers are Clare Pegg and Jen Jenner.

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 policies and procedures.

The Swan Nursery School 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 independence 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.

The Swan Nursery School 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 Michelle Bowgen 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 confide about abuse. The Swan Nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This policy 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 Swan Nursery School aims to:-

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of staff.
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the 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 us and are kept informed of all 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.

Contact telephone numbers

- Ofsted: **0300 123 1231**
- Norfolk Safeguarding children board: **01603 228966**
- LADO: **01603 223473**
- Care connect (Referral line): **0344 800 8020**

- **Professional consultation line: 01603 224134**

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 act 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

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. 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 will also be logged on an “existing injuries form”.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the Supervisor/designated person.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into the setting or occur during time at the setting, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member.
- 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 appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) in the local authority will be notified.

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, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, 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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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 symptoms may also 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 document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult will reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk.
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report (Cause for concern form)
- The observed instances will be reported to a safeguarding officer.
- The matter will be referred to LSCB in the local authority.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types

of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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.

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 will be discussed with the designated persons.
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- A Family Support Form (FSF) 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

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Action should be taken under this heading if a 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 the 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 the setting unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at pre-school 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 a 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 the setting. They may be clingy and emotional.

In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

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

We recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and that they have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care when they are in our charge and we will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our setting.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record supported by the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) of any observation or disclosure and include the following please use a “Cause for concern form” found in the confidential cabinet in the staff cupboard.

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSO, dated and kept in the confidential “Cause for Concern” file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. 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 FSF 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 the 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 setting to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The Swan 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 receive child protection training within their first six months of employment, and receive initial basic 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 setting.

We have four named Safeguarding Lead Practitioners within the Nursery who co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues.

The SLP's undertake specific training and access regular updates to developments within this field.

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 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 setting or has access to the children.
- We ensure we request at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
- 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 concern.
- 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 setting, so that no unauthorized person has unsupervised access to the children.
All visitors/contractors will be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.
- All staff have access to a whistle blowing 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 training and any needs for further support.

- The deployment of staff within the setting allows for constant supervision and support.

Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group (for instance when toileting), 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 may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform 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 Swan Nursery School takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the Nursery.

- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the 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.