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**Safeguarding Children Policy**

Written by Claire Fitzgerald Date: January 2021

**Child protection / safeguarding children**

The Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 define safeguarding and promoting children and young people’s welfare as:

* Protecting children from maltreatment
* Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
* Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
* Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children (and parents) from:

* Neglect
* Physical abuse
* Sexual abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
* Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
* Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
* Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
* Child sexual exploitation and trafficking
* The impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example, sexting
* Teenage relationship abuse
* Substance misuse
* Issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
* Domestic violence
* Female genital mutilation
* Forced marriage
* Fabricated or induced illness
* Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
* Other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

My first responsibility and priority is towards the children in my care as I am the lead safeguarding practitioner for my setting.  I will follow the steps contained in the ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children April 2018’ guidance, ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners March 2015’ I will refer to the LSCB website [www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk) for up to date information for professionals and families.

I am aware of the additional barriers that exist when recognising signs of abuse and neglect of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or medical conditions and will ensure their needs are met.    If I have any cause for concern I will report it to the MASH+ Team, following the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. I understand that child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or a mixture of these, and am aware of the signs and symptoms of these. I must notify Ofsted of any allegations of abuse, which are alleged to have taken place while the child is in my care.

**If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, I will refer to MASH+ and/or the police.** I will record, in writing, all concerns and discussions about a child’s welfare, the decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.

If I am concerned about a child’s welfare, I will contact the Local Authority’s MASH+ Team for advice and support or to make a referral.  Confidentiality will be assured only when it is clear that there is no risk of harm to a child.  I aim to share all information with parents but in some instances (where I am worried about a child’s wellbeing) I may have to refer concerns without discussing this with you.  Child protection concerns that could identify a particular child are kept confidential and only shared with professionals or other agencies that need to know this information.

Parents must notify me of any concerns they have about their child and any pre-existing injuries to the child.  These will be recorded and signed by the parents either in the incident part of my Accident, Incident and Medication book or in my Bumps and Bruises book.

Unless I believe that it would put the child at risk of further harm, I will discuss concerns with a child’s parent if I notice:

* significant changes in children’s behaviour
* deterioration in children’s general wellbeing
* unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
* children or parents comments which give cause for concern including expressing extremist views
* any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child’s home, and/or
* inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any person working with children.  For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, behaviour towards a child not appropriate for the child’s age or inappropriate sharing of images

If a child tells me that they or another child is being abused, I will:

* show that I have heard what they are saying, and that I take their allegations seriously
* encourage the child to talk, but I will not prompt them or ask them leading questions. I will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account
* explain what actions I must take, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child
* write down what I have been told using exact words where possible
* make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion.

I will call the MASH+ Team – 0121 464 2614 for advice **on the day of the concern**.  I will follow this phone call up with an email attaching a completed EHFSA the same day with an email CASS@birminghamchildcaretrust.co.uk .  I will record the concern and all contact with MASH+ and/or social services thereafter. The EYFS welfare requirements require me to let Ofsted know of any concerns that I have reported as soon as is reasonably practical, but in any event within **14 days**of the incident.

Before calling the MASH+ Team I will record:

* the child’s full name and address
* the date and time of the concern/incident
* factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present
* details of any previous concerns
* details of any explanations from the parents
* any action taken such as speaking to parents.

**It is not my responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation myself.**

**If an allegation is made against me, or any member of my family, or other adults or children in my home who have had contact with minded children,**I will record it and will report it to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted within 24 hours following the LSCB procedures. I will follow this phone call up with a letter/email to the MASH+ Team the same day. Appropriate support will be available for any person who is the subject of allegations whilst the procedure is being investigated.

I must also ensure that no individual who is unsuitable to work with children has unsupervised access to a child in my care.  I will refer to the ‘Working together to safeguard children’ 2018 document and the ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ – Advice for Practitioners document 2015.

More information and advice can be found on the following websites if I have concerns over a child or their family.  I can also seek advice from my PACEY Co-ordinator at the Local Authority.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre – [http://www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk/)

Childnet International website – [http://www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com/)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – [http://www.paceuk.info](http://www.paceuk.info/)/

Domestic Abuse and Violence (DAV) – <https://www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

Honour Based Abuse, including forced marriages and female genital mutilation –

<http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/h_to_k/honour_based_violence_and_forced_marriage/>

Google: Birmingham early help family support assessment

**Whistleblowing**

‘Whistleblowing’ means raising or reporting concerns relating to the welfare or safety of children and young people.  Everyone who comes into contact with children and families in their everyday work has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All childminders, their assistants, students on placement or volunteers have a responsibility to report abuse and malpractice to the relevant authorities when it is suspected or if they have concerns regarding the way in which children are being cared for, no matter whom they will be reporting.  They should be watchful for any illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct and should report anything of that nature that they become aware of if there is a failure to meet Ofsted standards of registration or welfare requirements of the EYFS.

If the concern is relating to a safeguarding issue then the normal child protection flowchart procedures will be followed. Advice can be sought via the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) or through PACEY’s Safeguarding Allegations and Complaints service, through which a referral can be made.  Any concerns I have will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

**British Values**

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2017 EYFS framework.  I will ensure that I promote good manners, sharing, turn-taking and respect for other people’s cultures and beliefs. We will celebrate relevant festivals throughout the year.  Democracy can be demonstrated in action by children sharing views on what they want with a show of hands.

**The Prevent Duty**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on early years providers ‘to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ (the Prevent duty).  The duty came into effect in July 2015.  Statutory guidance on the duty is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>.

I have a copy of the Prevent Duty and Guidance for reference purposes.  I am aware of the Department for Education telephone helpline (0207 340 7264) to raise any concerns relating to extremism directly.  Concerns can also be raised by email to

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

I am aware of the signs and indicators of extremism or radicalisation. If I have any concerns about extremism or radicalisation regarding a child or any member of their family I will report my concerns to the relevant Prevent Officer at the Local Authority.

**E-Safety (including use of mobile phones and cameras)**

Electronic communication:

My first priority is the safety of the children in my care with regard to electronic communication. This guidance also includes myself and any older children or other responsible adults who may have access to the children in my setting.  Electronic communication includes any device that can access the internet or share information e.g. personal computer, laptop, smart mobile phones, electronic gaming systems, smart televisions, electronic tablets, etc.

I will act professionally at all times to ensure the safety of the children when using electronic equipment.

Electronic devices should be password protected and/or covered by a parental control and filtering system, for example, Net Nanny. When using the devices children will be supervised at all times.  Websites that the children in my care are accessing will be monitored in order to assess their suitability and to ensure their content is relevant to the age of the child.

I will not allow children to access unsuitable websites, chat rooms or other inappropriate forms of electronic communication.  I will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding risks, including online risks. I, or any other adult who is responsible for the children in my setting, will not post any information that relates to my childminding practice on any Internet site, for example, Facebook or Twitter.  If you would prefer your child not to have access to the Internet, please can you let me know and indicate this on the parental permission form.

Mobile phones and cameras:

I understand that mobile phones are an everyday part of life for parents and childminders and with that in mind have laid out my procedure for their use:

* I will ensure my mobile phone is fully charged and with me at all times in case of emergencies.
* I have the facility to take photographs on both my mobile phone and camera and will seek your permission to take any photographs of your child to record activities and share their progress with you.
* I will not publish any photographs of your child on any social networking sites or share with any other person without your permission.

No-one else will be allowed to have access to my mobile phone and it is password protected.  My mobile phone contains parent’s confidential contact telephone numbers.

I request that you do not use your mobile phone whilst dropping off and collecting your child.

Any visitors to the setting will also be asked not to use their mobile phone.

If your child has a mobile phone, games console, etc. with camera facilities that they wish to bring into the setting please let me know.  This is so that we can work together for the safety of all children in attendance and ensure appropriate access to material when using the internet.  Children will not be allowed to use their mobile phones in the setting.  If they have a concern about using mobile phones they should speak to me and I will discuss with them why they are not allowed to use it, if age appropriate.

If they are expecting an important call from their parents I will keep the mobile phone with me at all times and will pass it to the child when the call comes.

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 I have registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office as a data controller to allow me to store digital images on a device or computer.  **Parents must not post any photographs of other children from my setting (only their own child) on social media sites.**

I will be the only person who will be able to take photographs of the children.  Photographs will be used in the child’s learning journey to evidence their learning and development and will be shared throughout the day with parents on our individual What’s app. Prior parental permission will have been obtained before any photographs are taken of the child.

**If I am sent an indecent image on my mobile phone, or any other device, I will immediately call MASH+, Ofsted and the police to inform them.**

**FGM -female genital mutilation**

I have had training on FGM and know what to do if I have concerns for a child, this practice is banned in the UK and I know what signs to look out for.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>.

**Breast ironing.**

Breast flattening, also known as breast ironing, is the process during which young pubescent girls’ breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.

In some families, large stones, a hammer or spatula that have been heated over scorching coals can be used to compress the breast tissue. Other families may opt to use an elastic belt or binder to press the breasts so as to prevent them from growing.

Breast flattening usually starts with the first signs of puberty, which can be as young as nine years old and is usually carried out by female relatives under the ‘misguided intention’ of protecting her from rape and sexual harassment.

As well as extreme pain and psychological damage, the practice puts the young women at increased risk of developing cysts, infections and even cancer.

It should also be acknowledged that some adolescent girls and boys may choose to bind their breast using constrictive material due to gender transformation or identity, and this may also cause health problems.

Breast ironing is a ritualised form of child abuse and will be reported accordingly if signs or symptons are discovered.

**Child sexual exploitation**

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

I regularly attend refreshers courses to keep up to date with current legislation.

 **Peer on peer abuse.**

This is probably more relevant to older children – however, children as young as 4 have been reported under the Prevent duty as being exposed to radicalisation or extremism through their family. Peer on peer abuse is a form of bullying and abuse – it is not a normal part of growing up.

I would investigate and discuss with you (if appropriate ) and inform the LADO ( Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding )  if  was worried that a child is being abused or coerced into doing something they don’t want to do by another child. This might be in relation to, for example, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, being exposed to radicalisation or extremism, online pornography or sexting etc.