



FOREST ROW COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL POLICY 6 CHILD PROTECTION

Forest Row Community Pre-school is committed to providing a safe and friendly environment for families to leave their pre-school children. We have a written Health and Safety policy, all staff are vetted by Ofsted and the Criminal Records Bureau, and access to pre-school by persons unknown is prevented.

All small children suffer from cuts and bruises at some time or another and family circumstances can change causing stress or unusual behaviour. Most injuries or unusual behaviour have a simple explanation but we must be alert to possible dangers to children. Any injuries to children which occur during the pre-school session are dealt with in accordance with the Accidents & Emergency policy. However, the staff and volunteers of the pre-school have a duty to the children, with whom they are in contact, to prevent any physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The child protection policy and associated procedures apply to all pre-school children regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

All the children's activities are carefully planned, ensuring that every activity is appropriate for a group of children who are under the age of 5 years old.

Specifically trained in the area of child protection and nominated representative is our pre-school supervisor, currently Mary Upfold, who can be contacted directly on 01342 822656. This number should **ONLY** be used where issues of child protection are concerned. Mary incorporates child protection issues into day to day session planning to raise children's awareness in a manner which is appropriate for this age group. The children are encouraged to talk through all their concerns and problems (not just child protection related issues) and this is done by gaining the respect and trust of the children in her care.

Child Protection Procedures

Defining & Recognising the Different Types of Abuse

Four Types of Abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse** – May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent / carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse can be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect a child.
2. **Emotional Abuse** – The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
3. **Sexual Abuse** – Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and / or females. This includes people from all different walks of life.
4. **Neglect** – Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Action in Case of Concern for a Child

Staff should be able to respond appropriately to any:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour;
- Deterioration in their general well-being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse;
- Signs of neglect;
- Comments children make which give cause for concern

Should the supervisor notice any unusual marks or injuries on or unusual behaviour by a child at the start of pre-school an explanation should be sought from the parent/carer and brought to the attention of a second member of staff to establish that the injury did not occur at pre-school.

If unusual marks or injuries or unusual behaviour are noticed during the pre-school session, the supervisor should be informed immediately.

If the supervisor is not happy with an explanation from the parent/carer and/or otherwise has a concern about a child, she must record the injury/concern on the child's registration form and act in one of the two following ways:

- 1) If the supervisor has any concern for the immediate safety of a child in her charge she must contact the Local Authority Delegated Officer without delay.
- 2) If the supervisor is concerned about a child but does not fear immediate danger then she must seek advice from the Local Authority Delegated Officer who can be contacted at North Wealden Children and Families Social Services on 01323 466606..

Social Services will not guarantee anonymity, so should an incident occur in which the above action is taken the supervisor must inform the pre-school Chairman. Whilst the decision on action is made by the supervisor, our supervisor should not feel that they carry the burden of such an incident alone, they should seek support from Social Services and the pre-school Chair. However, **ANY INFORMATION RELATING TO A CHILD PROTECTION CASE IS CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH STAFF, COMMITTEE MEMBERS OR PARENTS WHO ARE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED.**

Keeping Records

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual on-going records of children's progress and development. The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child, timed and dated observations: describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretations - where possible, the exact words spoken by the child - the dated name and signature of the recorder.

Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be accessible to people other than the supervisor, chair and key worker or other member of staff as appropriate.

Support to families

- The pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The pre-school makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child and liaising at all times with local social services department.
- The pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- 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 Area Child Protection Committee.

- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the social services department in relation to the pre-schools designated role and tasks in supporting the child and family, subsequent to any investigation.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff or Volunteer.

If a volunteer or member of staff is accused of any form of child abuse, s/he will be interviewed immediately by the person in charge of the group. The person accused may choose to attend the interview accompanied by a friend or colleague and to seek advice from a PLA representative. The interview will usually be with the pre-school supervisor but if the allegation is against the supervisor, the interview may be conducted by the chair. The person against whom the allegation was made will be informed of the allegation and will immediately be suspended on full pay while an investigation is made. Investigations will be in line with Area Child Protection Committee procedures and conducted in conjunction with the Area Child Protection Committee. Confidential records will be kept of the allegation and of all subsequent proceedings.

The Chair of the committee will be responsible for ensuring that Ofsted are informed of any such allegations within 14 days of the allegation being made.

Safe Recruitment Procedure

Current staff, volunteers and committee members are all vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau and by OFSTED. A parent's rota helper who is not a committee member and therefore has not been checked by the CRB is not left alone with any child, unsupervised. All parent helper's are made aware that they should not help children requiring the toilet.

All new staff, volunteers and committee members will undergo the vetting procedure. In addition staff / volunteers in daily contact with the children will also be carefully selected using the following procedures.

Completion of an application form

1. Checking the person's identity
2. Taking up references which are seen before the interview and verified by a follow up phone call
3. Interview by two people
4. Check the reasons identified for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
5. Criminal Records Bureau and OFSTED checked
6. Will have no unsupervised access to the children until all of the above have been completed
7. Will have a supervised probationary period of 12 weeks. During this time an induction programme will be followed and the individual will attend a Child Protection Training Course run by the EYDCP

8. All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will not be confirmed unless Pre-school is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

In the event of changes to the policy, staff and volunteers will be notified. An additional copy of the policy will be made available and held on file at Pre-school. The policy is also displayed on a daily basis on the notice board at the entrance to the pre-school for everyone to see.

Requirements for Staff Training, Monitoring and Supervision

All staff / volunteers including the nominated child protection representative will attend training in Child Protection provided by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The EYDCP in conjunction with Social Services provide Child Protection Training based on the 'Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Recognising Child Abuse' booklet and covers:

- What is Child Abuse
- Recognition
- What action to take
- Allegations against workers or their families
- Dealing with parents
- Personal support networks

The EYDCP has developed and continues to develop this training programme specifically for people who work with children of pre-school age.

All staff / volunteers will follow the guidance set out in the publication 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Summary' published by DCSF. A link is available on the EYFS CD-ROM. This includes guidance on information sharing and confidentiality.

Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are fully trained creates an environment where concerns of child protection can be raised with confidence.

The nominated representative will ensure that pre-school workers understand the child protection policy and procedures and adhere to the code of behaviour. All staff should remain vigilant and responsive. Staff and volunteers with concerns regarding child protection issues will be supported and encouraged to ask questions and talk to the nominated representative.

Code of Behaviour for Staff and Volunteers

1. All relationships between pre-school workers should be based on mutual respect. Workers are expected to contribute and take responsibility for ensuring a positive working environment and conduct themselves appropriately.
2. Appropriate conduct and relationships with children include:

Avoid initiating physical contact with children
 Avoid physical expressions of emotion such as kissing and hugging
 Avoid intrusive forms of play, such as tickling, rough and tumble. If physical contact is offered from a child, cease it at the earliest possible moment without causing the child to feel rejected.
 Avoid physical contact when alone with a child
 If a child persists in physical contact that is inappropriate, it must be explained that workers should not kiss/hug people that they work for or with.
 If the child continues to persist with inappropriate contact, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Supervisor.
 For intimate care tasks such as changing nappies / wet clothes, pre-school workers will ensure two adults are present for the duration of these tasks.

3. Physical contact with children for the purpose of restraint is appropriate when it is used in order to prevent injury to an individual, or themselves, or to prevent serious damage to property.

Complaints Procedure

Please refer to the Forest Row Community Pre-school policy for the reporting of complaints.

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