

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.



(Registered charity number 10360990)

1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy (Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy statement

Digswell Pre-School will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Key commitment 1

Digswell Pre-School is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:
Ekta Mason

- Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is:
Ekta Mason

- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.

- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks (DBS) and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks (DBS) are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - the criminal records disclosure reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
 - details of who obtained it.
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.

Key commitment 2

Digswell Pre-School are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
 - significant changes in their behaviour;

- deterioration in their general well-being;
 - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
 - We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
 - We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
 - Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
 - Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
 - We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
 - We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
 - We take account of the need to protect young people aged 15-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in

behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:

- listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child;
 - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
 - The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.
 - Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- The Pre-School may contact the Targeted **Advice Service (telephone number - 01438 737511)** in cases where the Designated Person is unsure of whether the social care threshold has been met.
- The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication Safeguarding Children contains procedures for making a referral to the local **children's social care team (telephone number 0300 123 4043)**, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral.
- We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our Local Safeguarding Children Board, which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child in greater danger.
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the social workers will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. Contact details: **HSCB** Office, Room 127 County Hall, Hertfordshire, SG13 8DF. Telephone **number 01992 588757 / 0300 123 4043**, email: admin.hscb@hertfordshire.gov.uk, website www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together (see contact details above)
- We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Contact details: **Ofsted**, Picadilly Gate, Store Street, /Manchester, M1 2WD. **Telephone number 0300 123 1231**, email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept: North London and East of England website: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/NSPCC-in-your-area/north-london-and-the-east-of-england/service-in-your-area_wda84241.html

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate:
Tony Purvis – LADO: 07920283106/01992556979, email: tony.purvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk
or Marrie Moat – Support Officer – 01992555420, email: marrie.moat@hertfordshire.gov.uk

- We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information as well as Ofsted and the agency that the staff member is registered with, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups. The disqualification of an employee could be an instance of a significant event.

Whistleblowing

It is important to Digswell Pre-School that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees or people engaged in the organisations business, is reported and properly dealt with. The Pre-School therefore encourages all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the Pre-School or the way in which the Pre-School is run.

Digswell Pre-School recognises that effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with and the organisation's success ensured.

Whistleblowing relates to all those who work with or within Digswell Pre-School who may from time to time think that they need to raise with someone in confidence certain issues relating to the organisation. If staff have a concern about malpractice within the organisation then they should use the procedure outlined below:

- Report any concerns to the Pre-School Leader. If this is not possible, then report concerns to a member of the committee.
- All employees and those involved with the Pre-School should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within the organisation. They should be watchful for illegal, inappropriate or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter they raise under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation will be reported back to them.
- They will not be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that their continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the Pre-School's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

- If they make a maliciously, vexatious or a false allegation then this will be considered to be a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action will be taken against them.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If they are told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority, they should not agree to remain silent. In this event they should report the matter to a more senior member of the committee e.g. the Chair of the Committee.

Free confidential advice is available from the independent whistleblowing charity 'Public Concern at Work', this charity can provide support to decide whether and/or how to raise concerns. Their contact number is 020 7404 6609 or email whistle@pcaw.co.uk.

If an employee is concerned about practices and procedures for safeguarding young children, they may wish to contact the **Ofsted Whistleblower hotline on 0300 123 3155** or email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or write to : WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD.

- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- In these cases, both the parent and the setting are informed and the setting leader works with Ofsted and/or Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Key commitment 3

Digswell Pre-School is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering young children, through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- Designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

COVID-19

Following the government and WHO advice, the following will be put into practice from September 2020:

- There will be a 'one-way' system in operation for drop-off and collection times.
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the building unless an appointment has been booked.
- Staff will clean surfaces and contact points regularly during the day
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands at regular intervals and the use of hand sanitiser will also be applied to children's hands every hour.
- Staff will be required to wear gloves when preparing and serving any food to the children.
- Staff will wash and sanitise their hands at regular intervals during the day.
- All toys and play equipment will be cleaned after use each day.
- Visitor will only be permitted into the building with an appointment.
- Medicines and first aid will be administered with the use of PPE (gloves and mask)
- We will continue to wear PPE to change nappies or clothes if a child needs changing.
- Although it is challenging to maintain social distancing at a young age, we will encourage children to play at a distance from one another wherever possible.
- We will keep children sat at a distance from each other during lunch and snack time.

- **A child may not attend pre-school if he/she is self-isolating, has symptoms or a positive test result for coronavirus or has been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus.**
- **If a someone (adult or child) tests positive for Covid-19, the setting will be closed immediately and everyone will be sent home to self-isolate for 14 days.**

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Safeguarding children and young people and young vulnerable adults (Ofsted 2015)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (DfE 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners (CWDC 2010)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (DfE 2015)
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings (Ofsted 2015)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check

This policy was adopted by

DIGSWELL PRE-SCHOOL

On

SEPTEMBER 2020

Date to be reviewed

SEPTEMBER 2021

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School committee
Name of signatory

MARTA ERENBK WALCZAK

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

CHAIRPERSON