



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This policy lays out the procedure to be followed if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to any form of abuse or neglect.

Our primary responsibility is the welfare and well being of each individual child in our care.

As such we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any concern that may come to our attention.

It is the duty of all staff members/ volunteers and trustees to report any concern or suspected abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL for Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery is Katie Keeble

In the event that Katie cannot be contacted, or should it not be appropriate then the Deputy Safeguarding Lead Wendy Gale will take responsibility, following the procedures laid out.

If concern about a child or their family comes to our attention, Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery DSL has a duty to contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub- Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHAD). Their Safeguarding Manager will determine what action is required and manage any immediate risk.

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| CHAD | 01305 868224 |
| Dorset safeguarding board: | 01305 221196 |
| LADO: | 01305 221122 |
| POLICE (Non-emergency) : | 01202 222222 |
| Ferndown Social Care: | 01202 877445 |
| Poole Social Care: | 01202 735046 |
| Out of Hours: | 01202 657279 |
| OFSTED | 0300 123 1231 |

Whilst staff play a lead role in safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. However, we recognise that it is the responsibility of everyone. The safeguarding culture at Little Owls Pre-School, is that everyone has a role to play in protecting children and their families.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children' September 2022)

At Little Owls Pre-School and Nursery we support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairments of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered in this single policy, therefore, this document will be used in conjunction with our other policies and procedures.

At Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery we work in partnership with children, parents, professionals and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children, to provide every child with the best start in life and support families in a time of need. All children deserve to be: treated with respect, helped to thrive and be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To achieve this we:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop the skills of independence, to confidently explore and learn, in an age appropriate manner.
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children to thrive and flourish
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families need intervention and seek the help they need.
- Share information with practitioners and other agencies as appropriate

Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and their welfare. If the points outlined are not being met, the matter should be reported to the attention of Katie Keeble or Wendy Gale at the earliest opportunity.

Due to the many hours of care we are providing for children and their families, practitioners or volunteers will often be the first people to spot signs of abuse or change in their behaviour. They may well be the first person a child/ children confide in about abuse. Once this has been identified, Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery have a duty that appropriate action must be taken to prevent further abuse.

Indications of Abuse:

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive Behaviour/changes in behaviour
- Inappropriate language or forms of play
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Injuries in unlikely areas
- Repeated injuries
- **Unaddressed illnesses or injuries**

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 can be abused by family, institutions, members of the community, peer groups and with society heavily dependent on technology and social media this could be from people that are known to them or complete strangers. This information provides a foundation of understanding for practitioners that Maltreatment of children is occurring in society and takes many forms.

Physical Abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is a definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruises or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child e.g. fleshy parts of arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face. This does not mean that injuries could not be in other areas of the body.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should be logged on an existing injury form and discussed with the pre-school manager. If these injuries show signs of abuse this is to be reported to the DSL (Katie Keeble or Wendy Gale) at the earliest convenience.

Procedure

- Any Concerns should be reported to the DSL
- Any observed instances or sign of a mark or injury to a child when they come to Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery will be recorded, with detailed description of each injury to clarify the extent or location of injury.
- This will be discussed with the parent and the parent asked to countersign the record.
- If there appears to be a discrepancy or query regarding the injury or it is discovered after the parent/carer has left and the child discloses the name of the person causing the injury, this will be shared with CHAD, who may notify the police if they feel the child is in danger of significant harm.

Child on Child Abuse

We are aware that child on child abuse does take place, so we include this in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. This has the potential to happen both inside and outside of the setting environment. We will report this in the same way we do as for adults abusing children, and will take advice from the appropriate bodies in this area.

Sexual Abuse

Action will be taken if the staff member has witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in role play with peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language. A child could also become worried or distressed when removing clothes for nappy changes etc. The physical symptoms that could be observed through nappy changes or intimate care support, may include genital trauma, discharge, bruises between the legs, (STD) sexually transmitted disease. Emotional symptoms could include change in behaviour, withdrawn or overly extroverted.

Procedure

- **The concerns should be reported to the DSL**
- **A sensitive approach will need to be taken and children should be listened to.**
- The observed instances will need to be recorded. Marks will be confidentially reported
- The matter will be referred to CHAD who may notify the police if there are concerns or danger of significant harm.
- The matter will be referred to the social care team
- A sensitive and confidential discussion will be held with parents once referrals have been made and children that had been party to the inappropriate play.

Emotional Abuse

Action will be taken if the staff team 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 maltreatment or rejection.

A child's mental health is of huge importance. If a child is experiencing Emotional abuse it can affect a child's self-confidence, how they develop a positive self-image and the ability to thrive in all their areas of development. This can be caused by extremes of discipline, where a child is being shouted at or put down, lack of emotional attachment by parent or carer or placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse can also be imposed by a child witnessing domestic abuse, drug or excessive alcohol intake.

The child may show extremes of emotions. This can include shying away from adults that are abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or becoming clingy in order to receive the love and attention that they are not receiving.

Procedure

- **The concerns should be reported to the DSL**
- The observed instances will be recorded.
- The matter will be referred to CHAD who may notify the police if there are concerns or danger of significant harm.

Neglect Action will be taken if the staff team 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 or failure to seek medical treatment) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Signs may include: a child persistently arriving at Pre-school unwashed or unkept , wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth), arriving at pre-school in the same nappy they went home in or an illness that is not being addressed by a parent.

Procedure

- **The concerns should be reported to the DSL**
- The observed instances will be recorded.
- The matter will be referred to CHAD who may notify the police if there are concerns that the child is in danger of significant harm.

The Children Act 1989 places a duty to investigate such matters. Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery will follow the procedures set out by Dorset Local Safeguarding Children's Board (DLSCB) and will take guidance on further action or procedures to be followed.

All records will be kept confidential on a need to know basis.

Allegations of child abuse or neglect could lead to criminal investigations staff will not do anything to jeopardise this, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate allegations themselves. If initial clarification is needed or if requested by CHAD, staff may use open ended questions (T.E.D. tell me, explain to me, describe to me) but should be mindful that CHAD and Police are responsible for child protection matters.

Fabricated Illness

This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by an adult carer. The adult will seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation.

Procedures

- The concerns should be reported to the DSL
- All marks or injuries will be recorded
- The children's social care team will be notified if a practitioner believed that the child was to come to harm
- Parents will be advised to seek professional medical support
- Staff will seek advice to support the family

Domestic Abuse

- Staff, Parents and carers are made aware of the Black dot initiative
- Website notifies a safe phone is available
- Signposting for support is available

Female Genital Mutilation

- Staff relationships built with all families to give opportunities enabling sharing and signposting for support and advice.
- Staff have undertaken training to raise awareness of this issue
- fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
- fgm helpline 0800 028 3550

Injuries to NON mobile baby or child

- Staff are aware that injuries to a non mobile child are unlikely to be accidental
- Our child protection and safeguarding awareness is “ whole family”

The Prevent Duty

Providers are required to *“have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”*

At Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery we actively promote **British Values** these are defined as:

democracy:

the rule of law,

individual liberty and mutual respect,

tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Negative attitudes and stereotypes will be challenged by all staff members.

Children are encouraged to respect themselves and each other, to learn right from wrong and that group rules and expectations apply to us all.

Further information regarding British Values and The Prevent Duty can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance

Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

Action will be taken if a concern is raised or allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer which suggests that a child has been harmed or is vulnerable to abuse.

Procedure

- Katie Keeble to be notified who will seek advice and direction of procedure to follow.
- Should a safeguarding allegation be against Katie Keeble then Wendy Gale will directly inform CHAD team for advice and follow their direction.
- In all cases Ofsted should then be notified of the allegation.
- In all cases a record of the report, which is timed, dated and includes a clear name and signature must be made.
- Suspension of the staff member may be considered necessary if:
- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police, or

- The allegation is so serious it may be grounds for dismissal.

Further information on Managing Allegations can be found in “Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2010”

Ensuring suitability of staff to work with children

In accordance with the Childcare Act 2006 and EYFS Welfare Requirements, all staff working at Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery are subject to rigorous checks and references prior to employment commencing. All staff are subject to checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS formerly). The Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check, health check, reference check under our Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures.

All staff undertake training in Safeguarding Children and Young People and update this training to maintain their knowledge and understanding.

Staff are asked to familiarise themselves with this document and always act within the guidelines.

Staff roles include responsibility to safeguard children and report to the DSL any concerns.

Staff will monitor and report on changes in children’s appearance or behaviour.

Staff must:

- Give comfort and support to the child as appropriate
- Not force the child to talk about the abuse or ask leading questions
- Maintain confidentiality for the protection of the child and family
- Speak to the DSL as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate action can be taken
- Record, using clear language, what has been said or heard
- Staff must ensure that their conduct is at all times exemplary and does not put children in danger or bring the setting into disrepute.

Staff are obligated to inform Little Owls Pre-School and Nursery of any conviction, caution, court order, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children whether received before or during their time with the group. This may include any such orders made against their family or immediate acquaintance in line with government legislation.

A full and thorough induction is carried out with all new staff, students and regular volunteers. In all cases the new person will be allocated a mentor, their interactions supported and supervised. They will not be left alone with children until all checks have been completed.

A record is kept of staff details, clearance dates, qualifications and attendance at the group.

All staff and visitors are required to sign in and agree whilst on premises, to abide by Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery policies and procedures.

Staff, students or visitors may not use their personal mobile phone or camera to take pictures of the children, staff or parents either within, or outside the setting in accordance with our policy.

Staff must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.

Whistle Blowing

All staff, students and volunteers are made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding, which may include the action of colleagues. Any such concern should be raised with the DSL. Your concern will be listened to and acted upon. If your concern is about that person contact CHAD yourself without discussing this with colleagues. Follow the advice given to you.

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents/ carers have access to all group policies. A hard copy of this or any other policy will be given upon request and is available on our website

Parents and carers are to be reassured of the pre-schools commitment to their child's well being, this is paramount in all our actions and undertakings.

Parents/carers are to be reassured that any allegations against staff, students or volunteers, of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported to CHAD to investigate. All concerns should be directed to the groups DSL or if this person is the subject of concern then directly to CHAD.

At all times the child or young person's well-being comes first.

Little Owls have the right to seek advice, regarding a concern they may have about a child, before discussing it with the child's parent.

If the child is thought to be at risk of significant harm, a referral may be made to CHAD without having first discussed it with the parent.

Follow On

If a concern or allegation is made to the DSL a decision will be made regarding the next step, this could be to discuss the concern with parent/ carer; take further advice; or to raise the concern with CHAD Safeguarding Manager. The duty officer will advise the pre-school on necessary procedures, depending on the severity of the concern. They may investigate the concern, this may include a visit to Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery and or the family. Advice and support will be offered by that department to improve the care of the child.

Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery will continue to provide the best care for the child and work to support parents/carers in a confidential, non-judgemental manner.

Mobile phones/ Cameras

Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery accepts that staff members may need access to their personal mobile whilst at work.

All staff, and student phones will be kept with their personal belongings and used only in areas away from children in personal / family emergencies whilst at work.

Visitors to our pre-school are asked to comply with this procedure.

Little Owls Pre-School will use a mobile phone during forest school or outings. However, this is for emergencies only . No telephone contact numbers are stored on this phone to maintain confidentiality should the phone be lost.

- No cameras or mobile telephones will be taken into areas where personal care is taking place.
- No staff member, student or visitor may use **any** mobile telephone camera facility whilst at Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery, either indoors or outside.

- Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery staff use the Pre-school specific Ipad to take photographs of the children in our care.

Photographs of the children undertaking activities are used to share information with parents/carers, observe in order to plan next stages of learning, and to build self esteem in children as they take pride in their achievements. Photographs of children are used in online learning journals.

- Specific signed agreements are sought from parents for the use of photographs in Little Owls Pre-School & Nursery.
- All photographs of the children will be printed then deleted from electronic devices or print systems. Ipad and laptops are protected by passwords , to protect any data or photographs on pre-school equipment.