

CHESTNUT HOUSE DAY NURSERY

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY **(SAFEGUARDING)**

Since we see the children in our care regularly, we are in a prime position to notice any radical changes in their behaviour or worrying marks and bruises and to hear them talking about experiences which may give cause for alarm.

While recognising that a case of child abuse is a very stressful and distressing experience, we must accept and understand that our first responsibility and duty is to the children in our care. Parents should be aware that the nursery have a duty by law to take action if we suspect that any child is suffering from abuse. In cases where the nursery has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse the staff have no alternative but to follow local authority child protection procedures and inform the duty and assessment team and ofsted.

We intend to create an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

In order to achieve this, we will:

Exclude known abusers

It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the nursery that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Known abusers will not be permitted to enter nursery premises at any time, or for any reason.

Staff Recruitment

All applicants who apply to work within the nursery will be interviewed before a job appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least two references. All such references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.

All applicants will be subjected to a Criminal Records Check through the company TMG. If the applicant is successful, they will not be left alone/unattended with the children, until a satisfactory DBS check has been received.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subjected to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the nursery is confident that the applicant can safely be entrusted with children.

Seek and supply training

We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the group to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse and are up to date with any Child Protection issues or changes.

Prevent abuse by means of good practice

Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

The layout of the nursery will permit constant supervision of all children.

Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse

The first concern will be the child. Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to, reassured and helped to understand that they themselves are valued and respected and have not been at fault.

Changes in children's behaviour/appearance will be observed, recorded and investigated. (See Signs & Symptoms sheet overleaf).

An approach will be made informally to the parents to see if they have noticed any changes in behaviour, and to seek explanations for unexplained bruises or marks.

If we are satisfied with the response and consider that there is still a problem, the matter will be taken up with Social Services (as laid out in the Government booklet 'What to do if you're worried if a child is being abused').

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know.

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. The person accused may choose to attend the interview accompanied by a friend or colleague. The person against whom the allegation is made will be informed of the allegation and will be immediately suspended on full pay while the 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 proceeding.

Keep 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 ongoing 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 interpretation; 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 Nursery Manager, Keyworker or other member of staff as appropriate.

Liaise with other bodies

Chestnut House Day Nursery operates in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the registering authority. Confidential records kept on children about whom the nursery is anxious will be shared with the Social Services Department if the nursery feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided.

The nursery has up to date information on safe-guarding children, found in the Cheshire County Council 'Safe Guarding Children' pack and at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Any issues or concerns we have about a child can be shared with the Social Care Access team on 01606 275099 opening times 8.30am to 5.00 pm or out of hours 01244 977277 and they are also able to answer questions and offer advice or call Cheshire Police on 0845 458 0000

Sharing Information

Sharing information amongst practitioners working with children and their families is essential.

The nursery will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the group.

Where abuse at home is suspected, the nursery will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations are being made.

Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with parents.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the nursery will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

Links with EVERY CHILD MATTERS...

- Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe.

MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS.....

Personel MOBILE PHONES and CAMERAS are NOT under any circumstances to be used within the nursery setting. A nursery mobile phone is issued to staff for use when on outing/school run this phone does not have internet or a camera.

A nursery camera is provided for staff use only.

All mobile phones are to be kept in the staff room or in the nursery office.

Staff and Parents/Carers are not permitted to use their mobile phones while on the nursery premises.

This is for the protection of all children

Child Protection continued, SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

The following section is divided into the four main areas that help us to categorise what we may be seeing or hearing.

Children may show symptoms from one or more of the following areas....

Physical Abuse

- *Scratches
- *Bite marks
- *Bruises in areas that are not from usual play e.g. on the face, below eye-line and around the ears, abdomen, groin, small of back, back of legs.
- *Burns of all kinds that do not have an explanation consistent with the marks
- *Undue fear of adults, shown by ducking when approached (as if anticipating being hit).
- *Failure to thrive.

Physical Neglect

- *Exposure to danger, lack of supervision.
- *Inadequate/inappropriate clothing.
- *Constant hunger.
- *Poor standard of personal hygiene.
- *Untreated illnesses.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may occur by itself or in conjunction with physical abuse. It may occur when a child is physically well cared for and is often more difficult to detect than other forms of abuse.

- *Overly withdrawn child
- *Overly aggressive child
- *Constant wetting and soiling
- *Persistent rocking movement
- *Very poor language development
- *Inability to relate to peers or adults

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- *Soreness/itching in the genital area
 - *Unexplained rashes, marks, bruising, swelling in the genital and anal areas.
 - *Pain on urination, re-occurring urine infections
 - *Difficulty/discomfort in walking or sitting
 - *Stained or bloody underclothes
 - *Recurrent tummy pains and headaches
- Bruising found on inner thighs and buttocks

Behavioral Indicators

- *Frequent masturbation (many children may masturbate occasionally for comfort or experimentation).
- *Inappropriate language and drawings for the age of the child
- *Inappropriate sexual knowledge for the age of the child
- *Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- *Wariness of being advanced by anyone, possibly combined with a dazed look

Remember...

- *Look for a cluster of signs and symptoms. Many of the indicators above may be caused by other problems, but should always be brought to the attention of the Manager.
- *Write down and date all observations of worrying marks/behaviour and any explanations that may have been given.

What do you do?

If a child discloses any information to you, listen carefully, remain calm and trust your own judgment. Report to the Manager immediately.

- *Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them to stay safe.