



Registered Charity No 1035670

## **Allegations against a member of staff, student or volunteer Policy**

### **Adults' behaviour which might be a sign of abuse and neglect**

Inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person working with the children that might be a sign of abuse or neglect.

For example:

- Inappropriate sexual comments;
- Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities;
- Inappropriate sharing of images.

### **WHAT TO DO IF CHILD ABUSE IS SUSPECTED: RECOGNITION AND REFERRAL**

Any concern regarding safeguarding **must** immediately be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the setting. If the concern is related to the DSL, then the referral should be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding committee member. The concern/allegation **must** be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will give advice and guidance on procedures, oversee cases and ensure that the child's voice is heard

#### **18.1: In an emergency immediate steps must be taken to ensure the safety of the child (Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures):**

- if it is suspected a criminal offence has been committed or that the child is in need of immediate protection telephone the Police **immediately**
- request medical assistance if required

- telephone the Single Point of Advice (SPoA) for East Sussex County Council (**01323 464222**)
- notify parents/carers or legal guardians (do not contact parents/carers or legal guardians if this will place the child at further risk of harm)

**18.2: In all other circumstances the following steps must be taken to safeguard the child (Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures):**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must:
  - Speak to parents where it is felt this will not put the child at further risk
  - inform Children's Social Services through SPoA (Contact numbers are provided at the end of this document)
  - make relevant referrals to LADO regarding the perceived risk but **at least within one working day of the recognition of the risk**
  - Ensure clear information is provided regarding the child, including:
    - The child's name;
    - Address;
    - Sex/Gender at birth;
    - Date of birth;
    - Name(s) or Person(s) with parental responsibility (for consent purposes) and primary carer(s) if different.
    - Details of all concerns regarding the child including witness statements etc
  - Ensure clear records are kept and that verbal notifications are followed up by a written confirmation within 24 hours
  - Ensure that information is shared on a "need to know basis only" and that, where appropriate, parents and carers are kept informed and/or supported appropriately
  - Keep records of concerns confidentially in a lockable filing cabinet
  - Participate in on-going enquiries or multi-agency meetings as appropriate

**OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse towards a child, pertaining to a member of staff, student or volunteer; or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.**

## Dealing with allegations or concerns against any employee, student or volunteer

Allegations may arise in a number of ways: e.g. a report from a child; a complaint from a parent/carer; or a concern raised by another adult within the organisation. An allegation might concern someone's behaviour or actions either within his/her employment, a voluntary activity, or within his/her family or private life.

The person receiving the allegation should treat the matter seriously. It is important not to make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.

It is essential to act quickly and effectively if an allegation is made, or if there is suspicion or concern about a professional or volunteer's relationship with a child, young person or group of children/young people, particularly if they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she/he is unsuitable to work with children

If an allegation is made, or a concern arises about a member of staff or volunteer, ensure that the Settings Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is informed immediately; **the DSL must immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the concern/allegation being raised.** If the allegation concerns the DSL, then the Designated Safeguarding committee member should be contacted, who will then follow the same procedure.

The LADO is available to provide advice or support around any concern or allegation against an adult, and will explain the process, including advising whether or not immediate suspension of the person concerned should be initiated.

**If the LADO is unavailable, the Head of Children's Safeguarding must be contacted on 01273 481289; if the concern is raised out of hours then the out of hours service or, in an emergency, the police must be contacted.**

Records should be secured and will be strictly limited to relevant staff and external professionals on a need to know basis only.

An accurate written record should be made to include time, date, place and any witnesses and should include as much as possible the child's/adult's words. The matter should be reported to the safeguarding leader who should seek advice from the LADO to make a decision about whether or not the allegation indicates that someone has:

- behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children

The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly, helped to understand the concerns expressed, the process being followed and any outcomes of the process. The member of staff will be suspended on full-pay whilst the investigation is on-going. This is necessary in order to protect both parties.

**Senior managers should seek advice from the LADO and Children's Social Care or Police before informing the person who is subject to an allegation. Relevant contact numbers can be found at the end of this document.**

### **Record keeping**

The Lead Safeguarding Practitioner will:

- keep full and contemporaneous notes, signed and dated, of child protection concerns, referrals, information shared (with or without child's/parent's consent), multi-agency discussions and agreed actions in the child's record
- record decisions regarding safeguarding on the parents'/carers' records (if these are kept separate from the child's) as well as the child's record
- identify family members and other significant individuals in the child's record to enable cross-referencing
- protect the confidentiality of personal information and abiding by the setting's information security standards

Records relating to safeguarding should be kept in line with national guidelines-this currently stands at 21 years and 3 months.

### **Safer recruitment and selection**

Beckley Preschool has a separate Staffing and Recruitment Policy to enable us to check whether potential employees are safe and allowed to work with children. This process supports us as a setting, to avoid and also minimize the possibility of an allegation against an employee, student or volunteer within the workplace. We use the following guidelines for the recruitment process:

**Advertisement of posts and application packs** will make explicit reference to the commitment of the setting to safeguarding, including:

- Compliance with vetting and barring regulations ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - "Employing People")
- Clear statements in the job description and person specification that explicitly reference the individual's safeguarding responsibilities
- Providing information about the Safeguarding Policy and practices to applicants

### **The selection process will:**

Comply with vetting and barring regulations ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) - "Employing People")

Always use application forms (CVs should not be accepted)

Have a minimum of two people checking for any gaps in employment history and explore these gaps during interview

Ensure at least one reference is from a previous employer and specifically ask if there have been any concerns or allegations about the applicant's behaviour towards children and/or any disciplinary action and confirm with the referee the applicant's responsibilities. Compare this information with that provided by the applicant; any inconsistencies or concerns regarding the information provided in a personal reference must be followed up directly with the referee

Ensure that any concerns arising from the applicant's medical reference are followed up directly with the applicant and with the employee's doctor

Seek to explore at the interview the applicant's attitudes towards children and young people, their motivation for pursuing the role and managing boundaries

Always ensure that any other uncertainty or inconsistency about the information provided about the applicant is followed up and resolved

Check qualifications are valid by requesting certificates are presented

Check identify by requesting documentation e.g. passport, driving license or similar

Ensure at least one member on the short listing/interview panel has been suitably trained on safer recruitment

### **Safe Caring**

Beckley Preschool will ensure that all staff understand its safeguarding procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of **safe caring**; all sessions and activities will be carefully planned and be age/stage appropriate.

To this end:

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If staff are alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff should be informed.
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, students or volunteer, this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book.
- All personal telephones, cameras etc. must be left in the kitchen/staff room when the children are on the premises. You must never have any form of a personal recording device on your persons in any areas which the children use when they are in attendance. Photographs taken of the children by the staff for recording evidence for their journals will only be taken using the settings cameras and will be kept on the premises.

- Staff will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, staff will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, staff should not accompany children into the toilet. All staff are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.
- All activities will be planned and appropriate.
- All staff are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and maintained. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff. Beckley Preschool will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.
- Staff will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Any children involved in alleged incidents will be comforted and reassured.

### **Appointed team members responsible for 'Allegations against a member of staff, student or volunteer'**

Katie Appleton - Manager (DSL) - 01797 260582

Stephanie Bloomfield - Chairperson (designated safeguarding committee member) - 01797 260582

## CONTACT NUMBERS FOR EAST SUSSEX CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Team	Telephone number
<b>Single Point of Advice (SPoA)</b> Child Protection and Child in Need referrals for children and young persons living in East Sussex Available at: <a href="mailto:0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk">0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01323 464222
<b>Children's Disability Service (CDS) - accessed through SPoA</b> Available at: <a href="mailto:0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk">0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01323 464222
<b>Emergency Duty Service - covers East Sussex and Brighton &amp; Hove</b> For a serious concern about a child's welfare that cannot wait until the next working day: Out of hours on weekdays from 5pm - 8.30am (after 4.30pm on Fridays). Also weekends and bank holidays Available at: <a href="mailto:webspoa@eastsussex.gov.uk">webspoa@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01273 335905 or 01273 335906
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Donna Davis</b> Available at: <a href="mailto:amanda.glover@eastsussex.gov.uk">amanda.glover@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01323 466606 or 07825 782793
<b>East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership</b> Available at: <a href="mailto:ESSCP.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk">ESSCP.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01273 481544
<b>Ofsted general enquiries:</b> Available at: <a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a> <b>Ofsted concerns about a provider:</b> Available at: <a href="mailto:CIE@ofsted.gov.uk">CIE@ofsted.gov.uk</a>	0300 1231231  0300 123 4666

This policy was adopted by the Management Committee of Beckley Preschool on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory