

Active Care Safeguarding Policy

Version 1

Completed Date: 30th August 2024

Review Date: 30th August 2025

Purpose

The Safeguarding Policy outlines our commitment to protecting the welfare, safety, and well-being of all children in our wraparound childcare provision. Our goal is to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment where children feel valued and are protected from harm.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents, and visitors within our provision. It is informed by current safeguarding legislation, guidance, and best practices. All staff must adhere to the principles and procedures outlined in this policy.

Aims

- To provide a safe environment for all children in our care.
- To identify children who may be at risk of harm and ensure appropriate action is taken.
- To establish clear responsibilities for staff in relation to safeguarding.
- To work collaboratively with parents, guardians, and external agencies to protect and promote the well-being of children.

Key Principles

- **Best Interests of the Child:** The safety, well-being, and best interests of the child are paramount in all considerations and actions.
- **Zero Tolerance of Abuse:** Our provision has zero tolerance for any form of abuse or neglect. All concerns will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken promptly.
- **Empowerment:** Children should feel confident and encouraged to share any worries or concerns they may have.
- **Confidentiality:** Information will be handled sensitively, shared on a need-to-know basis, and stored securely.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The DSL is responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices, managing disclosures, and liaising with external safeguarding authorities. They will keep up to date with current safeguarding legislation and best practices.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):** The DDSL supports the DSL and steps in during their absence to handle any safeguarding concerns.
- **All Staff and Volunteers:** Every staff member and volunteer has a duty to report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL. Staff will receive regular safeguarding training and are expected to remain vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect.

Types of Abuse

All staff should be aware of the different forms of abuse, which include but are not limited to:

- **Physical Abuse:** Causing physical harm to a child, including hitting, shaking, or other harmful actions.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Behaviours that harm a child's self-esteem, including bullying, threats, or ridicule.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involvement of a child in sexual activities or exposing them to inappropriate material.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide for a child's basic physical and emotional needs, which can impair their health and development.

Recognising Signs of Abuse

Staff should be vigilant for indicators of abuse, which may include:

- Unexplained injuries or marks
- Changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, or aggressive
- Poor hygiene, malnutrition, or inappropriate clothing
- Regressive behaviours, such as bedwetting or fear of certain individuals

Procedures for Reporting Concerns

1. **Immediate Action:** Any concern about a child's welfare must be reported to the DSL immediately, whether it is a suspicion of abuse, or a disclosure made by the child.
2. **Disclosure Handling:** If a child makes a disclosure, staff should listen attentively without judgment, avoid leading questions, and reassure the child that they did the right thing in speaking up. Staff should not make promises regarding confidentiality.
3. **Recording:** All disclosures and concerns must be documented accurately, including dates, times, and details of the concern. Reports should be factual and objective, avoiding assumptions or personal opinions.
4. **Confidentiality:** Information about safeguarding concerns should only be shared with those involved in handling the concern and authorities when necessary.
5. **Referral to External Agencies:** If necessary, the DSL will make a referral to the appropriate safeguarding authorities, such as social services or law enforcement, following local safeguarding protocols.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- **Immediate Reporting:** Any allegation or concern about the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer toward a child must be reported to the DSL immediately. If the allegation involves the DSL, the report should be made to the designated officer at the local authority (LADO) directly.
- **Investigation:** The DSL or an appointed investigator will conduct an internal investigation in line with local safeguarding procedures. Where required, external authorities will be involved.

- **Support for the Child:** During and after the investigation, appropriate support will be provided to the child and their family.

Safer Recruitment Practices

- **Screening:** All staff and volunteers will undergo thorough background checks, including enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, to ensure they are suitable to work with children.
- **Interview Process:** Candidates will be interviewed based on their experience, suitability for working with children, and understanding of safeguarding practices.
- **Induction and Training:** New staff members will receive safeguarding training during their induction, and ongoing safeguarding training will be provided to all staff members regularly.

Safeguarding Training

- **Induction:** All new staff will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction programme, covering the types of abuse, recognising signs of abuse, and how to report concerns.
- **Ongoing Training:** Regular safeguarding training sessions will be held to ensure that all staff remain knowledgeable about current safeguarding practices and legislation.
- **Refresher:** All staff are required to participate in annual safeguarding refresher as part of staff training to stay updated on policy changes and best practices. Staff will also be required to take a relevant course every 3-years or sooner at the discretion of the DSL.

Creating a Safe Environment

- **Child Protection:** Our provision has a secure environment that includes safe entry and exit procedures, visitor sign-in processes, and staff supervision in all areas where children are present.
- **Positive Relationships:** Staff will foster positive, supportive relationships with children, promoting trust and open communication.
- **Anti-Bullying:** We are committed to creating a safe space where bullying is not tolerated. Staff will monitor interactions and address any instances of bullying in line with our behaviour policy.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information related to safeguarding concerns is confidential and will only be shared with relevant staff or external agencies on a need-to-know basis.
- Staff should be mindful of sharing information responsibly and in line with data protection laws to protect the child's privacy and well-being.

Monitoring and Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and complies with the latest safeguarding guidance and legislation. Staff feedback and any updates to statutory guidance will be incorporated into the review process.

Personnel

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Doncaster Children's Services:

Referral and Response Team

Office hours: 01302 737777

Out of hours: 01302 796000

Police:

Phone 101 or in an emergency 999.