

Rickmansworth Children's Centre



Child Protection

This policy represents the agreed principles for child protection throughout the Children's Centre.

The staff of the Children's Centre, the Children's Centre Advisory Body and the Governors of the Lead Agency, Shepherd Primary School, have agreed this policy.

All Partners of the Children's Centre will be expected to have regard for the policy and procedures for child protection.

Where partners will be providing services from, or on behalf of the Children's Centre, they will be required to sign an agreement stating that they will follow the Children's Centre's policy and procedures for child protection.

Aim:

Our aim is to provide a safe, caring environment for every child. Within this environment, the opinions and values of each child will be respected and their concerns listened to: in short, their welfare and protection is of paramount importance.

Protecting children from significant harm depends on effective joint working between professionals from various agencies. Co-ordinated support from health, education, social care, the voluntary sector and other agencies will be key in safeguarding vulnerable children. This joint working will require building constructive relationships between agencies and partners and the Children's Centre will be pro-active in promoting partnerships.

"All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families and to recognise that **safeguarding children and young people from harm must be everyone's business.**"
*Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004)*¹.

Parents and staff will be made aware of the Children's Centre's child protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.

Legislation

The fundamental core of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004), The Children Act, 2004 and the *Change for Children* (DfES, 2004) programme consist of five outcomes for children, the Outcomes Framework;

- ◆ Being Healthy
- ◆ Staying Safe

¹ DfES (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. Available:
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/F9E3F941DC8D4580539EE4C743E9371D.pdf>

- ◆ Enjoying and Achieving
- ◆ Making a positive contribution, and
- ◆ Economic well-being.

Being Safe should underpin all practice involved in working with young children. Section 11 of the Children Act, 2004 places a statutory duty, taking effect on 1st October, 2005, on key bodies and people to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2006)*², highlights the importance of individuals and organisations working together to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

Local safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) needed to be in place by 1st April 2006 and evolved from existing Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) to promote key agencies working together to safeguard children. The core membership of LSCBs is set out in the Children Act 2004, and includes local authorities, health bodies, police and others. The role of the LSCB is to coordinate the effectiveness of the member agencies in best supporting and promoting the welfare of children.

The Senior Designated Person

The Senior Designated person for safeguarding is: **Ms Debbi Keeley**

The role of the Senior Designated Person is to:

- ◆ Ensure that Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB) child protection procedures (2007) are followed in the Children's Centre (information can be found on Herts Direct – Local Safeguarding Children's Board).
- Available: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/caresupport/childfam/childprotection/a/cpc/procedures/>
- ◆ Ensure that all staff and partners are aware of these procedures
- ◆ Ensure that all staff and partners are aware to whom they must convey their concerns
- ◆ Make referrals where child abuse is likely to occur, or is suspected or disclosed
- ◆ Attend case conferences, or to ensure that the appropriate member of staff or partner attends, and is aware of the procedure of the child protection conference
- ◆ Ensure that a report is prepared for conference and to take part in core groups as is required
- ◆ Meet with relevant professionals, i.e. Social Services, to monitor children at risk
- ◆ To inform parents about concerns and any actions being taken
- ◆ To maintain confidentiality at all times

² DfES (2006). *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*

Should a complaint need to be made against a member of staff, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) are to be contacted at CSF Client Services. Contact on: 01992 556936 or 01992 556935.

However, Child protection involves everyone working in the Children's Centre and children should be empowered to be able to keep themselves safe by the adults working with them.

Procedures

- ◆ If any member of staff or partner is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Senior Designated Person immediately
- ◆ Notes should be made regarding the concerns, as quickly as possible, and the recording must be factual and precise
- ◆ The Senior Designated Person shall decide whether an immediate referral is necessary. He or she may decide to seek advice initially from Social Services
- ◆ After a verbal referral has been made to Social Services, the Senior Designated Person will write a report confirming the telephone conversation
- ◆ Particular attention will be given to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.

When to be Concerned

- ◆ When a child has frequent or untypical injuries, not normally associated with the explanation offered
- ◆ When a child exhibits untypical behaviour, his or her progress at the Children's Centre alters dramatically or attitude changes
- ◆ When a child indulges in sexual behaviour either, verbal or non verbal, that is unusually explicit or inappropriate to his or her age.

Everyone working in day care services should be capable of recognising possible abuse or neglect of a child. Reference must be made to the booklet *What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Summary*³.

Dealing with a Disclosure

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused, the member of staff or partner should:

- ◆ Listen to what the child says without displaying shock or disbelief
- ◆ Accept what is being said
- ◆ Allow the child to talk freely
- ◆ Reassure the child but not make promises which may not be possible to keep
- ◆ Do not promise confidentiality – it may well be necessary to tell Social Services
- ◆ Reassure the child – **it is not his or her fault**
- ◆ Stress that it is right to tell

³ DfES (2006). *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – summary*.

Available:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/FD21D51F594298457CF64BE9CDF6F179.pdf>

- ◆ Listen, do not ask direct or leading questions
- ◆ Do not criticise the perpetrator – the child may well still love him or her
- ◆ Explain what you have to do next

Record Keeping

When abuse is disclosed or suspected the member of staff or partner should:

- ◆ Make brief notes as soon as possible giving quotes if they can be recalled. Dates and times should be recorded. These notes must not be destroyed, even if a more detailed report is written later. They may be needed by the court.
- ◆ Draw a diagram to indicate any marks or injuries observed.

Support

Dealing with child protection is always difficult and stressful. Members of staff or partners should consider seeking support for themselves, initially from the Senior Designated Person.

Allegations Involving a Member of Staff

Where an allegation is made against a colleague, immediate advice must be sought. The County Child Protection Guidelines/Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board must be followed. The local authority child protection unit and OFSTED will be informed and confidentiality maintained at all times. If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to Children Schools and Families, the Head teacher and Local Authority Designated Officer will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation. The Head teacher should, as soon as possible, **following briefing** from the Local Authority designated Officer inform the subject of the allegation.

For further information see:

Hertfordshire Safeguarding children Board Child Protection Procedures:
Section 10, Allegations Against Those Working With Children