

Safeguarding of children policy

Introduction

This policy sets out common values, principles and beliefs and describes the steps that will be taken by Next Steps in order to meet our commitment to protect children. This policy applies to all adults working with the children in our setting in any capacity.

This policy is in addition to all associated policies and procedures which promote children welfare, including, but not restricted to, health and safety, anti-bullying, protection of children using the internet, whistle blowing, behaviour management, first aid, administration of medication.

Policy Statement

Next Steps acknowledge that the welfare of the child is paramount and that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. Next Steps fully recognise its full responsibilities for safeguarding children

Aim and objectives

All allegations, complaints or suspicions of abuse are taken very seriously and responded to appropriately. The nursery cannot promise confidentiality as the matter may develop in a way that this cannot be honoured, however, Next Steps have strict guidelines on sharing information which we adhere to in accordance with Sefton Safeguarding Children Procedures (2007) and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (DfES 2006)

We will follow the procedures set out by the local safeguarding children board and take account of guidance issues by the department for education and skills, the Every Child Matter agenda and the Child Care Act 2004 so that:

- We practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- All Job descriptions and personal specifications clearly identify the competences necessary to fulfil the duty of care
- Applicants with posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974.
- We have a designated senior person for the safeguarding of children who receives appropriate training and support for this role.
- Every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for the safeguarding of children and their role.
- Induction procedures for all new staff, parents, volunteers and students include briefing on safeguarding of children policies and procedures.
- All staff and volunteers will sign and abide by the code of conduct.
- All staff and volunteers will have access to this document.
- Where services are provided by another body, the body concerned have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We foster a culture of openness and support by having an effective transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual.
- All staff and volunteer understand their responsibilities in being alert to their signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for the safeguarding of children.

- Systems are established to investigate possible abuse once reported and to respond swiftly and appropriately
- Procedures are established to record, investigate and respond to allegations made against a member of staff
- We ensure that all staff and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
- When ensure that staff and others are clear of what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
- Training, Learning Opportunities and support will be provided to all staff and others to raise awareness of all the staff and enhance their knowledge of how to identify abuse.

Supporting the Child

Next Steps recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The nursery may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at nursery their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Next Steps will endeavour to support the child through:

- Raising awareness of Safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Establishing a safe environment where children can learn and develop, feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensuring children know that there are adults in nursery whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Including opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed Safeguarding Children Plan.
- The implementation of our key carer system, which promotes positive secure relationships and gives children a sense of being valued.
- Next Steps behaviour policy, which ensures that children know that some behaviour is unacceptable.
- Next Steps is guided through the Safeguarding of children process by the principle that all staff and others will endeavour to listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of all children in our care.

Working in partnership with Parents to safeguard children

Next Steps believes the best results for all children happen when parents and nursery staff work together in partnership. This is particularly important for the Safeguarding of children.

Next Steps is committed to providing a flexible and supportive service responsive to the individual needs to give all parents/carers the opportunity to be involved in decisions about their child's care. Wherever possible we will endeavour to keep parents/carers informed and consult with them about their child. It is our intention to:

- Operate an open door policy where parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns with nursery staff in complete confidence (as far as reasonably possible)
- Ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the nursery and staff for Safeguarding children by setting out its obligations in the nursery prospectus which is issued to all parents/carers before their child attends Next Steps.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure the Safeguarding of children.
- Ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about staff or other persons associated with Next Steps, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- Recognise that it is good practice to discuss concerns with the child's family/carer and agreement will always be sought for a referral to children's services unless this may, either by delay or the behavioural response it prompts, place the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where a decision is made by any practitioner not to seek parental permission before making a referral to children's services, the decision will be recorded and the reasons given. Where a parent has agreed to a referral this will be recorded and confirmed in the referral to children's services.

Working in partnership with other agencies to safeguard children

Next steps fully recognise its responsibilities to work in partnership with other agencies to ensure the safeguarding of children and will take the following steps to ensure that our partnerships are effective and efficient:

- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a child who is on the child protection register
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate fully as required with their enquiries regarding the safeguarding of children including attendance at case conferences.
- Notify OfSTED of any incidents or accident that may affect the safeguarding of children
- Liaise with other agencies that support the child such as social serves, Child and Adult Mental Health Services and Education Psychology Service.
- Ensure that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves Next Steps their information is transferred to the new setting immediately and that the child's social work is informed.
- The designated person for the safeguarding of children within the setting receives relevant training to ensure that they are clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so.
- Accurate and up to date contact details or relevant bodies for making referrals will be maintained at all times and fully accessible to all staff and volunteers. These wil include:

The Local Social Care Emergency Duty Team 0151 934 3737

0151 920 8234

SEYCQIS 0151 934 3165

OfSTED 0845 640 4040

Next Steps Code of Conduct

All Staff, volunteers and students must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

It is important for all staff and others to:

- Always act, and be sent to act, in the best interests of the child.
- Treat information they receive about Children in a confidential manner.
- Seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them.
- Know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.
- Be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with children and young people.
- Understand that the behaviour and actions of their partner (or other family member) may raise questions about their suitability to work with children and young children.
- Wear clothing, which is appropriate to their role, not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative, is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans, is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.
- Refrain from asking children to undertake personal jobs or errands.
- Ensure that all selection processes which concern children are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff.
- Report and record any incidents or indicators (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may have developed an infatuation with an adult in the workplace.
- Have no secret social contact with children or their parents.
- Always approve any planned social contact they have with a child or parent with a senior manager.
- Advise senior management of any social contact they have with a child or parent which may give rise to concern.
- Report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the organisation or they own professional standing.
- Be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday cards or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with a senior manager.
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified
- Ensure that their relationships with children clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful, professional relationship.
- Take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour, language all require thought.
- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Do not indulge in horseplay
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently.
- Adhere to Next Steps Health and Safety Policy
- Be aware of cultural and religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues to gender.
- Treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body.

- Always explain to the child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take.
- Seek constant from parents where a child is unable to do so because of a disability.
- Conduct activities where they can be seen by others.
- Adhere to Next Steps physical intervention policy.
- Adhere to Next Steps policy for Administering First Aid and Medication.
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.
- Adhere to Next Steps Photography and video Policy
- Follow Next Steps Guidance on the use of I.T equipment.
- Adhere to Next Steps Whistle Blowing policy.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that all persons associated with Next Steps should avoid actions or behaviour, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

Next Steps Code of Conduct

All Staff, volunteers and students must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

All staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Use their position to gain access to information for their own or other advantage
- Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or may become so
- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model
- Make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such
- Have sexual relationships with children
- Have any form of communication with children which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letter, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts or physical contact.
- Make sexual remarks to, or about, a child.
- Change in the same place as children.
- Shower or bathe with children
- Assist with any personal tasks which a young child can do by themselves.
- Display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so from parents/carers
- Use images which may cause distress
- Use mobile telephones to take images of children
- Take images 'in secret' or in situations that might be construed as being secretive.
- Use language or make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Have a child with whom they are working stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that all persons associated with Next Steps should avoid actions or behaviour, which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

Next Steps guidance for responding to an allegation/concern

It is the responsibility of any person who hears/witnesses or has concerns about a child's safety to respond appropriately. The safeguarding of the child is paramount and a practitioner may be held capable if they fail to act after being privy to information that later leads to further abuse, critical injuries or death. The duty of the member of staff is to ACT, after which time the professional bodies can further investigate the allegation.

A Check list of how to respond

1. Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the manager/Designated Person within two hours.
2. The Manager/Designated Person will report the matter to the local Social Care Customer Access Team whether or not it is felt that this action is justified in the particular circumstances of the case.
3. The Manager/Designated Person will telephone and report the matter to the Local Social Care Customer Access Team, Duty Social Worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report will be confirmed in writing to the local Authority Social Serviced Department within 24 hours.
4. The Manager/Designated Person will discuss with the Social Care Customer Access Team what action will be taken to involve the police and to inform the parents of the child and a note of that conversation will be made.
5. If the Manager/Designated Person cannot be contacted within 2 hours of the initial concern arising, the person making the report must report the matter to the Local Social Care Customer Access Team and notify the manager as soon as possible.
6. Take such steps as necessary to ensure the safety of the child.
7. Ensure that a report of the matter as set out above is completed by the person who reported the initial concern regarding the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information including:
 - The date
 - The time
 - The place where the alleged abuse happened
 - Your name and the name of others present
 - The name and date of birth (if possible) of the complainant and where different, the name and date of birth (if possible) of the child who has allegedly been abused.
 - The nature of the alleged abuse
 - A description of an injuries observed
 - A drawing of the body indicating where the area of concern is.
 - The account which has been given of the allegation.
8. The Manager/Designated Person shall retain a copy of:
 - The report
 - Any notes, memoranda or correspondence dealing with the matter
 - Any other relevant material

Even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.

Copies will be kept securely locked at all times and separate to other information.

Procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff

As set out in the Sefton Safeguarding Children Procedures

1. Person receiving the allegation writes down details from child/adult including,
 - When the alleged incident took place
 - Who was involved
 - What is alleged to have take placeN.B – Neither party should be interviewed further
2. Written report of the allegation against a member of staff is immediately given to senior manager

**Designated Safeguarding of children co-ordinator
Ruth Rimmer**

**Second Designated Safeguarding of children co-ordinator
Christine Harris**

3. Senior person in organisation then assesses the nature of the allegation and consults the Local Social Care Customer Access Team on 0151 934 3737
4. Inform OfSTED 0845 640 4040
5. After discussion a decision will be made as to
 - Further Action
 - Internal Review of Organisation
 - No action required

Dated: 29/10/09

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