

NAME OF POLICY: SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

NAME OF SETTING: MONTESSORI PRE-SCHOOL HELEN'S BAY

Overall Aim of Statement:

Montessori Pre-School Helen's Bay believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm.

Named Child Protection Designated Officer: Cassie Jervis (Miss Cassie) 07476 241435

Out of Hours Social Services: 0800 1979995

Early Years Team: 028 4451 3807

Gateway Team: 0300 1000 300

Specific Objectives/Statements and Procedures

Montessori Pre-School Helen's Bay will appoint a member of staff as designated Child Protection Officer who is available at all times during the hours of service provision. This person will have suitable training experience and expertise and will be responsible for liaising with the Gateway Team and other external bodies in any safeguarding matter. Montessori Helen's Bay Pre-School child protection/safeguarding children procedures comply with all relevant legislation and other guidance or advice from the local Children's Social Work Service (Gateway). The provision is committed to reviewing its Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy at regular intervals.

The policies and procedures will be shared with parents/carers during the settling in period.

Staff Support and Training

The Pre-School is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection through the provision of support and training to staff. Therefore the Pre-School will ensure that:

All staff, students and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full up to date Access NI clearance checks.

All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Child Protection policy during their induction and have its implications explained to them.

All staff and volunteers receive regular training and supervision in child protection issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance

All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities to maintaining caring and safe relationships with children.

All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.

All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so.

All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the team leader.

The provision will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers.

Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Safe Caring

All staff understand the organisation's safeguarding children procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring.

Dealing with Allegations

The Pre-School is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegations seriously and sensitively. The Pre-school will not carry out an investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. On discovering an allegation of abuse, the Designated Officer for Child Protection will immediately refer the case to the Gateway team.

Further to this, the following principles will govern any suspected or reported case of abuse:

Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, they will report this to the team leader/Designated Officer for Child Protection at the earliest possible opportunity. Although our setting does not provide care to pre-mobile babies, it is aware of the importance to report to Gateway without delay any bruising on a pre-mobile baby.

Staff are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgement 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 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 the staff. The Pre-School will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.

The manager/leader and the Designated Officer for Child Protection will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially.

If an allegation of abuse is made against the leader or Designated Officer for Child Protection then the Trust's Early Years Team will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation or delegate this role to a senior member of staff.

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.

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation or a disclosure the member of staff concerned will:

Listen fully to what the child has to say

'Accept' what they are saying

Ask open questions and encourage the child to speak in their own words

Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone

Make no promises that cannot be kept such as promise not to tell anyone

Referring Allegations to Safeguarding Children Agencies

If the team leader or the Designated Officer for Child Protection has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been or is in grave danger of being subject to abuse, the following procedures will be activated:

Contact will be made at the earliest possible opportunity with the Gateway team or the Police

The team leader or the CPO will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with the advice given by the Gateway Team and the Police.

At all times the safety protection and interest of the children concerned will take precedence. The team leader and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.

The Pre-School will assist the Gateway Team and the Police as far as it is able during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written (multi agency referral form) and verbal information and evidence.

References to other relevant Policies

All policies i.e. Confidentiality, Discipline Procedure, Equal Opportunities, Induction/ Supervision of Staff, Recruitment and Employment, Whistle Blowing, Health and Safety

To be Revised Annually
Updated 1 July 2023

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