

STOWUPLAND PRE-SCHOOL AND THE MIGHTY OAKS

Safeguarding Children Policy

Statement of intent

Our setting wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in Stowupland Pre-school and The Mighty Oaks which encourages children to develop a positive self image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

The legal framework:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Children Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1989
- Data Protection Act 1984
- The Protection of Children Act 1999

Liaison with other bodies

- We work within the Area Child Protection Committee guidelines.
- We have a copy of Area Child Protection Guidelines available for staff and parents to see.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any major incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well being of children.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.
- Records of the local NSPCC contacts are also kept.
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the Area Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Staff and volunteers

- Our named person who coordinates child protection issues is **Ella Gissing**.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the need of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. At least one reference is required, which will be followed up. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements for candidates, regular volunteers and students to complete the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Declaration and Consent DC2 forms, ensuring that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Planning

The layout of the room and garden allows for constant supervision of all the children.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our foundation stage curriculum so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

Complaints/Allegations

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff, volunteers or students within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Area Child Protection Committee when investigating any complaint that a member of staff, volunteer or student has abused a child.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff, volunteer or student has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play give cause for concern, the setting will investigate.
- We allow investigations to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;
- listens to the child;
- reassures the child that he or she will take action.

An adult speaking to a child victim should never promise to keep the facts a secret. The member of staff will not question the child.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Staff make records of child's name, address, age, date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure with the exact words spoken by the child.
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported and names of any other person present.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.
- All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local Area Child Protection Committee does not allow this. Usually being the case when the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officer will inform the parents. The setting leader/child protection officer should be accompanied by the chairperson or other staff member, if discussing the situation with the parent/carer.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Area Child Protection Committee. Personal information about children, families and staff is kept securely in a lockable filing cabinet.

Support for families

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Child Protection Committee.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the list for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Appendix to Safeguarding Children Policy

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Examples of good practice

- Adults will not be left alone for long periods of time with individual children or small groups.
- An adult who needs to take a child aside for example, for time out, will make sure that they are within sight of at least one other adult at all times.
- Adults who have not been registered as 'fit' persons will not take children to the toilet or be responsible for any personal care for a child, i.e. changing a nappy or clothes.
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express themselves. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches. Ultimately, promoting the idea in children that they have a choice and the right to say no in a situation they feel uncomfortable with.
- The layout of the pre-school and garden will permit constant supervision of all children.

Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse

Should any member of staff have concerns for the welfare of any child they will immediately inform the setting leader/child protection co-ordinator. Child care responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse. However, the staff will keep accurate records of their observations and anything said to them by the child or others in connection with the suspected abuse. It is always important to listen to the children.

The first concern will be to the child.

- Staff must be aware of a change in children's behaviour or appearance and react accordingly.
- Staff must be prepared to listen carefully and sympathetically to any children who wish to confide in them and to take them seriously.
- An adult speaking to a child victim should never promise to keep the facts a secret.
- Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to, reassured and helped to understand that they are valued and respected and have not been at fault.
- It is rare for young children to make false accusation, especially of sexual abuse, and it must always be investigated.
- Under no circumstances should an adult ask a child a question, this could be seen as leading a child.
- Staff will not ask leading questions, they will be reflective listeners, repeating what the child has actually said.
- Children must not feel that the staff are interviewing them.
- Whenever worrying changes are observed a specific and confidential record will be set up, separate from the child's progress records.

How to record signs of abuse

Your report will need to contain the following information:

- Name, age and address of the child.
- Parents/carers names.
- Date and time of making the records.
- Are you reporting your own concerns or those of someone else?
- A brief description of what caused your concern, including incidents leading up to your concern.
- Description of any physical signs - use a body map to indicate where the signs are if a written description is not clear, copies of which are in the child protection file. It is important to describe any physical signs accurately without making value judgments as to the cause of the signs.
- Description of any behavioural changes.
- If the child has said anything, which has concern, what exactly did he/she say. It is important to try and remember the exact words and record the language the child used, rather than what you think he/she meant.
- Whether the parent has given an explanation for any of your concerns.
- Details of people to whom you passed on the information.

All concerns should be recorded, even if a minor incident.

Allegation of child abuse against a member of staff, volunteer or student

It is important that staff avoid putting themselves in situations that may lead to allegations being made against them. However, if an allegation is made:

- The setting leader or most senior member of staff and Chairperson should be informed on the same day as the allegation is made.
- The Chairperson will contact the person/s concerned individually and outline the allegations that have been made, and inform the person that it is the duty of the management to contact the Social Services Child Protection team and ask them for advice on how to proceed.
- The Chairperson has a duty to inform OFSTED at Nottingham, which is the registering authority (Tel. no. 0845 6404040).
- If the allegation has been made against a student, their placement officer or course tutor must be informed and the student will be asked not to attend until further notice.
- A paid member of staff will immediately be asked to take leave with full pay.
- A volunteer will be immediately asked to take leave.

- They will be asked to immediately hand over any keys and confidential information e.g. registers and records of the children and staff are not to enter the group premises except by prior arrangement with the setting leader or Chairperson.
- Suitable arrangements will be made to pay staff members on paid leave.
- The Chairperson or delegated committee member, setting leader or most senior staff members will immediately arrange for any required back up paid staff or volunteers to come in and ensure there are enough staff to cover all sessions.
- The Chairperson will contact Social Services and OFSTED and ask for advice on how to proceed.

Confidentiality

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, volunteer or student, all information is confidential. Please refer to the confidentiality policy.

Possible indicators of inappropriate behaviour of a staff member

- Pays an unusual amount of attention to children providing them with presents, money or favours
- Seeks out vulnerable children
- Seeks opportunities to spend significant amounts of time alone and unsupervised with a child or children.
- Spends a significant amount of time alone with a single child or a small group of children on a regular basis.
- Encourages secretiveness about their activities and time spent with children.
- Takes a child or children to his/her own home.
- Is vague about previous employment.
- Has an unusual amount of physical contact with a child or children.
- Touches a child in an inappropriate manner.
- Talks to a child in a sexually inappropriate manner.
- Avoids close supervision and management at work.

Protecting staff and children

When working in any childcare setting, staff need to be aware that they are in a vulnerable situation. Remarks made by very young children can be misconstrued. The behaviour of staff must be professional at all times and open to scrutiny.

- Staff should not show favouritism or spend too long with one child, unless it is following an observation and with the approval of the setting leader.
- When taking children to the toilet by themselves, they should aim to be within sight of another adult at all times where possible.
- Intimate tasks (e.g. changing children's underclothes) should be done in sight of one other adult at all times where possible.
- Keep the setting leader informed of any incidents, accidents or events that have occurred during the session.
- Staff should ensure that records are kept up to date and if an accident/incident occurs, ensure that it is recorded and witnessed by another member of staff.
- Use appropriate language in front of all the children at all times.
- Staff should be sensitive to how they approach children. DO NOT touch or pick up a child who does not want to be touched or picked up. Except in the case of either the child hurting him/herself or of the child hurting another child, then the staff member should remove the child from the danger.
- Touches from children that are worrying to staff should be reported immediately to the setting leader, as well as any other incidents that make staff uncomfortable.
- Staff should never ask children to keep secrets.
- When dealing with children's challenging behaviour, staff should never handle a child roughly. Where necessary, the committee will seek to provide staff with training in dealing with children that show challenging behaviour.
- Staff should not shout at any child or use sarcasm.

False allegations

False allegations can sometimes be made against a member of staff, perhaps because a genuine mistake has been made or a misunderstanding has happened. A false allegation may be made through malice, jealousy or revenge or even as a cry of help from a child. If allegations are made against you that you know to be false:

- Stay calm
- Follow the setting leaders instructions
- Co-operate with questions and enquiries
- Seek advice and support from appropriate professional advisors, friends and family
- Do not confront your accuser.

False allegations are usually found to be so once inquiries have been made.

Handling complaints

If a complaint is made against a member of staff it will be investigated. Both Social Services and OFSTED must be informed.

- Staff and the Chairperson should keep a record of all conversations they have, both face to face and on the telephone, concerning the matter and also copies of correspondence.
- Staff may wish to seek legal advice, either independently or through a professional association. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and they can be called on for legal advice and support.

Contact numbers

Social Services telephone numbers

Customer First	08456 023023
After 5.20 and weekends	01473 299669
Ipswich	01473 581580
Bury St. Edmunds	01284 352000

Suffolk Police telephone numbers

Main switchboard	01473 613500
Bury St. Edmunds	01284 725433
In an emergency dial	999

Suffolk Child Protection Committee 01473 583453

NSPCC helpline	0800 0560566
Child protection helpline	0808 8005000

This policy was adopted at an AGM of Stowupland Pre-School and The Mighty Oaks

Held on (date) Review Date

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School (Chairperson).....