



# Safeguarding Children – Child Protection Policy

At Millfield, we will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

## The legal framework and definition of safeguarding for this policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2014
- Working together to safeguard children
- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act 2004

We have regard to the Government's Statutory Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

- **Protecting children from maltreatment;**
- **Preventing the impairment of children's health or development;**
- **Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;**
- **Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.**

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2013').*

## To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image;
- Provide positive role models
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children;
- Always listen to children.
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need.
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate

Our nursery has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of John and Liz Miller at the earliest opportunity.

The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to identify that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

### **The nursery aims to:**

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff;
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times and that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest;
- Ensure that all staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children, i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour;
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures;
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need.
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (MASH see below)
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children, or living or working on the nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities;
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur;
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Nottingham Safeguarding Children Board (MASH see below).

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

### **Who to contact and contact telephone numbers:**

**For any new safeguarding concern regarding a child, or consider that a child is in need of specialist care in line with threshold guidance from the PATHWAY TO PROVISION, contact the Nottinghamshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).**

The MASH is Nottinghamshire's first point of contact for new safeguarding concerns and has significantly improved the sharing of information between agencies, helping to protect the most vulnerable children and adults from harm, neglect and abuse.

The MASH in Nottinghamshire is one of only a handful of MASHs nationally that handles concerns about both children and vulnerable adults, taking a holistic, family approach. Over 60 staff from the Police, Health, Probation Trust, Schools, Children's Social Care and Adult Safeguarding are working together in the MASH office.

The MASH receives safeguarding concerns from professionals such as teachers and doctors as well as members of the public and family members. For those concerns that meet the threshold for Social Care involvement, representatives from the different agencies in the MASH and outside will collate information from their respective sources to build up a holistic picture of the circumstances of the case and the associated risks to the child or adult. As a result, better decisions will be made about what action to take and support will be targeted on the most urgent cases. Feedback will also be given to professionals reporting concerns. Better co-ordination between agencies will lead to an improved service for children and families.

**Nottinghamshire MASH: 0300 500 8090**

(during the following hours: 8.30am – 5.00pm – Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4.30pm – Friday)

On line concern forms log onto [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/MASH](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/MASH)

In an emergency outside the above hours contact:

**The Emergency Duty Team: 0300 456 4546**

**OFSTED: 08456 404040**

## Types of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with Liz Miller

### Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member.
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records.

- If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Nottinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the local authority will be notified.

### **FABRICATED ILLNESS**

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing, the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

#### **Procedure:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk.
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to Liz Miller.
- The matter will be referred to MASH in the local authority.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

#### **Procedure:**

- The concern should be discussed with Liz Miller.
- The concern will be discussed with the parent.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records.
- A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may need to be completed.
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to the MASH in the local authority.

## NEGLECT

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

### Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records.
- A CAF may need to be completed.
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances the MASH in the local authority will be notified.

## INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones;
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies;
- Aggressive behaviour;
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff;
- Repeated injuries;
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

## Recording Suspicions of Abuse and 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;
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action;
- The member of staff does not question the child.

Staff should make an objective record (supported by Liz Miller) of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name;
- Child's address;
- Age of the child and date of birth;
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- Exact words spoken by the child;
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen;
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses;
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time;
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and Liz Miller, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important **not** to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the MASH and OFSTED and/or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the MASH and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

## Staffing and Volunteering

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance. All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery DSCO undertakes specific training and receives regular updates to developments within this field. The Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) at the nursery is: Liz Miller.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs 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 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed and the new ISA vetting and barring scheme will be implemented as required by law. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- The use of mobile phones, hand held devices etc are prohibited within the nursery. Staff keep their mobile phones in the staff room at all times. The nursery has a digital camera which is used by staff for photographing children for use in their development records and within the nursery environment (See **Mobile Phone and Social Networking Policy**).
- We abide by OFSTED requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- We ensure we receive at least two written references for a new member of staff who commences employment with us.
- All students will have enhanced DBS checks conducted on them before their placement starts.
- Students and trainees do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and the Childcare Act 2006 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 and 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.
- All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use.

- All staff have access to a **Whistleblowing Policy** which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner.
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support.
- We give staff members regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with 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.

## Curriculum

We introduce key elements of child protection into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be 'strong, resilient and listened to' and so that they develop understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

## Support to Families

The nursery believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families and staff and we make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the children's social care department. This information is detailed in our Parent information pack.

The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse. Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Nottinghamshire MASH.

## 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 Nottinghamshire MASH does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

## 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 Nottinghamshire MASH.
- **Allegations against staff.**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the HM Government guidance in *'Working together to safeguard children'*. See **Professional Abuse Policy**.

Policy Reviewed  
**October 2014**