

CATERPILLARS PRE-SCHOOL (SUSSEX) LIMITED

**2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Caterpillars Pre-school complies with the procedures approved by the West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:

Catherine Clark ( Senior Manager ) Main Co-Ordinator Setting (Southgate)

Hayley Smith (Manager) Setting (West Green) Co-Ordinator

We intend to create in our Preschool an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. In order to achieve this we will:

**Exclude known abusers**

1.1. It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the Preschool that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act2014.

1.2. All applicants for work within the Preschool whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least one reference. All such references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.

1.3. We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

1.4.All appointments both paid and voluntary will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the Preschool is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

**Seek and Supply training**

1.5. We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the Preschool to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

**Prevent abuse by means of good practice**

1.6. Staff members will not be left alone for long periods with individual children

or with small groups.

1.7. Parent helpers or other volunteers will never be left alone with an individual child or group of children.

1.8. Adults who have not been registered as “fit” persons will not take children unaccompanied to the toilet.

1.9. We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.

1.10. We ensure that all persons mobile phones and items are locked away in the designated area.

1.11. 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 them. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches

1.12 The layout of the Preschool will permit constant supervision of all children.

**Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse**

1.13. The first concern will be the child. Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to, reassured and helped to understand that they themselves are valued and respected and have not been at fault

1.14. Changes in children’s behaviour/appearance will be investigated, including any concerns of young children where there is a potential risk of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) or CALFB (Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief).

1.15. Parents will normally be the first point of reference, but if they are not in a position to allay any legitimate anxieties, the matter will be taken up with the Integrated Front Door( West Sussex pathway for all concerns relating to children regardless of risk or complexity) in accordance with procedures laid down by the West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board.

1.16. In exceptional circumstances, the Integrated Front Door may be the first point of reference.

1.17. All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved will be the member of staff/key worker, the Preschool leader and management.

1.18. If a volunteer of member of staff is accused of any form of child abuse, s/he will be interviewed immediately by the person in charge of the group. The person accused may choose to attend the interview accompanied by a friend or colleague. The interview will usually be with the Preschool Manager. However, if the allegation is against the Manager, the interview may be conducted by one of the Trainee Manager’s. The person against whom the allegation is made will be informed of the allegation and will immediately be suspended on full pay while an investigation is made. Investigations will be in line with the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and conducted in conjunction with their advice and guidelines. Confidential records will be kept of the allegation and of all subsequent proceedings.

**Keep Records**

1.19. Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child’s behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual on-going records of children’s progress and development. The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child: timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child’s behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child; the dated name and signature of the recorder.

1.20. Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be accessible to other people other than the supervisor, manager and key worker, or other member of staff where appropriate.

**Making a referral to the local authority social care team**

1.21. The Preschool will follow the procedures for making a referral to the local social care team, based on ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (HMG 2020) alongside ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ (HMG 2015)

1.22. We keep a copy of these document and follow the detailed guidelines given.

1.23. All members of staff are familiar with the Child Protection Record and follow the procedures for recording and reporting.

**Liase with other bodies**

1.24. The Preschool operates in accordance with guidelines laid down by the registering authority. Confidential records kept on children about whom the Preschool is anxious will be shared with the Social Services Department if the Preschool feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child’s condition have not been provided.

1.25. If a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child’s parents will be informed at the same time as the report is made.

1.26. The Preschool will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority,

together with names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency for the Preschool and the Social Services to work well together.

1.27. Records will also be kept of the local NSPCC contact, or other contact(s) as appropriate.

1.28. At times it may be deemed necessary to use WSCC integrated frontline services, to ensure support is provided to our families in a holistic manner. This service is accessed via an online system called Holistix, permission via parents/carers is always gained prior to accessing the system. ( see policy: Information Sharing).

**Confidentiality**

1.28. 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 West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.

**Support Families**

1.29. The Preschool will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the group.

1.30. Where abuse is suspected, the Preschool will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed.

1.31. Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with the parents.

1.32. With the provision that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the preschool will do all in its power to support and work with the child’s family.

Legal Framework

Primary Legislation

* Children Act (1989)updated 2019 c.10
* Protection of Children Act (1999)
* The General Data Protection Regulation Act (2018)
* The Children Act ( Every Child Matters) (2004)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Secondary Legislation

* Sexual Offences Act (2003)
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2015)
* Human Rights (Amendment) Act (2005)
* Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
* Equalities Act (2010)

Further Guidance

* Working Together to Safeguard Children ( HMG 2018 )-update 9/12/2020
* What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused ( HMG 2015 )
* Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
* Information Sharing: Practitioner’s Guide (HMG 2018)

This policy was adopted by the Manager of Caterpillars Pre-school on 03/04/2023

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Name of signatory: Catherine Clark Role of signatory: Manager