



**Maidenbower
Pre-School
Playgroup**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Lead Person Responsible: Janet Noad

Secondary Lead Person Responsible: Cheryl Gouldstone

Statement of Purpose

The introduction of this child protection policy should highlight the fact that Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup are determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those children or young people who attend Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup. This policy establishes the playgroup's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everyone involved within the playgroup. It very clearly highlights the importance placed by Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup in the protection of children and young people.

Every child that attends Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse and free from radicalisation. This is the responsibility of every adult involved within the playgroup. We recognise however, that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our own judgement about any action to be taken. Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying and radicalisation. We know that some children have additional barriers that may exist when recognising the signs of abuse and neglect of children who have SEN(D). All staff have knowledge of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and how to report this. Staff are aware of the potential peer to peer abuse that may occur and this will be dealt with through the Behaviour Policy. Staff follow data protection with regard to ICT equipment and all iPads, to include staff and children's, are monitored by the Lead Practitioner. Staff monitor children's absences and investigate and report this accordingly. We are determined to meet our obligation to ensure that we provide opportunities for the children with the highest possible standard of care. This policy has been written in line with the West Sussex County Council Safeguarding Children procedures and Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup will ensure that:-

- The welfare of all children is paramount.

- All children, whatever their age, gender, culture, disability, language, racial origin or religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and radicalisation will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All adults working within the playgroup have a responsibility to report concerns to the nominated person, in this case the Lead Practitioner. If the Lead Practitioner is not available then the Duty Practitioner.
- All staff have regard for the "What to do if you are worried about a child being abused" booklet and the Prevent Duty.

Key Principles

Maidenbower Pre-School Playgroup will take responsibility for

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Recruit, train and supervise all volunteers and staff members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and radicalisation.
- Ensure all new employees or volunteers are subject to the relevant checks before commencing employment. (DBS checks, referees and suitability checks).
- Ensure all employees and volunteers adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Protection Policies and procedures outlined within this document.
- Respond to any allegation appropriately.
- Review this policy on an annual basis.

A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989/2004/2006).

Exclude known abusers

- It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the playgroup that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All applicants who work within the playgroup, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide two references prior to applicants starting work. All such references will be followed up and kept on file. 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.
- All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a 3-month probationary period and will not be confirmed (in writing) unless the playgroup is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

- All appointments will have an enhanced DBS.

Seek and supply training

- We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the group to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, and emotional and sexual abuse and how to report suspected cases of radicalisation.

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not to allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home and playgroup. It is important to know and understand that some individuals will actively seek employment within playgroup in order to gain access to children in order to harm them. It is therefore important for everyone involved within the playgroup that has every day contact with children to recognise the fact that they are an important link in identifying cases where children are being abused or in need of protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the Lead Practitioner or in cases involving the Lead Practitioner, the Chair of the Playgroup Committee, and the guidelines in this policy should be followed.

Good Practice Means

- Always work in an open environment, where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and always encouraging open communication.
- Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups. An adult who needs to take a child aside - for example, for time out after inappropriate behaviour - will remain in the hall within full view of the rest of the group.
- Treat all children equally with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child first.
- Maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with all children.
- Build balanced relationships based upon mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Keep up to date with all qualifications and training in order to offer the best support possible to the children and the playgroup.
- Being good role models to the children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children.

- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs along with details of any treatment given.
- 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.
- Adults who have not been registered as "fit" persons will not take children to the toilet.
- Two members of staff who have enhanced DBS checks can take the children to the toilet.
- Staff must keep their mobile phones in the designated locked cupboard, switched off. Please see Safeguarding Policy.
- Visitors' phones will be left in the kitchen or in the locked cupboard for the duration of their visit.

Reporting of Abuse

It is not our responsibility to investigate or decide whether abuse or radicalisation has taken place or not, and in every instance we will pass on the information to the appropriate authorities.

If you have concerns about a child

- Report to Lead Practitioner
- Do not investigate the matter.
- Gather appropriate information and detail as documented below.
- The Lead Practitioner should report to the local authorities.

What should you do if a child reports abuse to you?

If a child discloses that they are being abused, whether in the playgroup or at home, then upon receiving the information you should:-

- React calmly.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously.
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of any possible future developments.
- Inform the child of what you are going to do next.
- Make a full and written record, including the date and time, of what has been said and heard as soon as practicable in order to maintain accuracy. Do not delay in passing on this information.

Incident Reporting Requirement

The report to the authorities should include the following:-

- The child's full details including full name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation if possible including times and dates but remember not to go into great detail as this could have implications on any possible future proceedings.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is hearsay.
- Any description of bruising or other injuries (annotate a body map). Also any other signs such as behavioural.
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.
- The child's brief account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injury or bruising occurred.
- If the parents have been contacted and their full details.
- If so what was the content of the conversation.
- Has anyone else been contacted and if so who and their full details.
- Where possible any referral to the Police or the Multiple Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should be confirmed in writing within 12 hours and the name of the person taking the referral should be recorded as a point of contact.
- Ofsted must be contacted.

What We Will Do Next.

Once a report has been made to the authorities, the responsibility for that incident is no longer with the playgroup. However, this does and should not preclude the reporting of further incidents. Do not assume that the playgroup will be communicated with further after reporting has occurred; be guided by the authorities advice, if given.

Severe and obvious cases of abuse will be reported immediately without delay.

Services for Children and Young People, Children's Social Care have a statutory obligation and duty under The Children Act 1989/2004/2006 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with any investigation. This may involve talking to the child, their family and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries involving criminal proceedings will involve the police who would take ownership in this instance.

If in any doubt, or need further support about procedures, please contact

MASH: 07595236779

Police: 101

LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) 03302223339

DBS Checks <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>