



# Danbury Pre-Schools



Registered Charity no: 1111808

Accredited PSLA membership no: 10584 DFES/Ofsted nos: 520349/581607

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Website: <http://www.danburypreschools.org.uk>

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our pre-school will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

As members of the PSLA we share their policy for safeguarding children. The key commitments are:

1. The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.
2. The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DfES 2006).
3. The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### Aims

Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by:
  - a) Creating an environment in our pre-school which encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
  - b) Encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
  - c) Enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults; and
- Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

The legal framework for this is:

*Primary Legislation*

- The Children Act 1989 - s47
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
- The Children (NI) Order
- The Children (Scotland) Order

*Guidance*

Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised 2006)

What to Do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused (revised 2006)

The Framework for the Assessment of children in Need and Their Families (2000)

The Common Assessment Framework 2005

*Secondary Legislation*

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)

Human Rights Act (1999)

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

**Liaison With Other Bodies**

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you a worried a child is being abused' available for staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.

- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the pre-school and Social Care to work well together.

Our local authority Social Care Department telephone number is: **01245 493622**. For full day care, this will be the out of hours duty officer whose telephone number is: **0845 6061212**;

- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well-being of children. Ofsted may be contacted on: **0845 640 4040** (calls are automatically re-directed to our local regional centre).
- Records of the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) contacts are also kept. The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline contact number is: **0808 800 5000**;
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority Social Care Department, we act within the Area Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

### **Method**

**We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Pre-School Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy**

#### Key Commitment 1

The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

### **Staffing and Volunteering**

- **Our named persons who co-ordinate child protection issues are listed at the front of this file.**
- **Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is:**

#### **The Chairperson**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the pre-school 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.
- 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 in respect of references and Criminal Records Bureau for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the pre-school 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 led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the pre-school.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the pre-schools so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

#### Key Commitment 2

The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (DfES 2006).

#### **Method**

##### **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the pre-school supervisor who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- Staff in the pre-school take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

##### **Allegations against staff**

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the pre-school, which may include an allegation of abuse. If a parent/carer is comfortable, they should approach the pre-school supervisor or, alternatively, the Chairperson.

- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's Social Care Department to investigate.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by Social Care in conjunction with the police.
- Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation; this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the pre-school 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.

### **Key Commitment 3**

The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### **Method**

#### **Training**

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre-school 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 pre-school.

#### **Planning**

The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left ajar. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

However, at First Friends this does occur for toileting purposes only where it is possible to be seen by others.

### **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 pre-school 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 children.

### **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; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child.

### **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- The age of the child;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
- The 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.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's file.

### **Making a referral to the local authority Social Care Department**

- **The Pre-school Learning Alliance's publication 'Child Protection Record' contains detailed procedures for making a referral to the local Social Care Department, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral. This is based on 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).**
- **All members of staff are familiar with the Alliance's Child Protection Record and follow 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 Safeguarding Children Board 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Support to families**

- The pre-school believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The pre-school makes clear to parents its 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 local Social Care Department.
- The pre-school continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the Social Care Department in relation to the pre-school's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board. Please also see procedure for accessing records in the pre-school's Confidentiality Policy.

### Complaints - What to do if I you are worried that an adult may be abusing a child

- We ensure that all parents know how to raise concerns about staff or volunteer action within the pre-schools, 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 or volunteer has abused a child.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
- Upon receiving an official complaint the following will happen:

The Supervisor who receives official complaint will inform Committee Chair. If a verbal complaint is made, we will ask for this to be put in writing

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The Supervisor will then ring Ofsted & Social Care who will follow-up complaint

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Staff member and any witnesses will then be interviewed by Supervisor or Committee Chair/Members to gain the overall picture

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Before any decision is made the pre-schools will phone Law-Call (who will confirm any legal implications)

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Pre-schools will then confirm to member of staff that there may be a suspension.

*Ofsted & Social Care will liaise closely with the Pre-schools throughout this process*

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Danbury Pre-Schools**

**Held on (date) 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**Date of next review July 2009**

**Signed on behalf of the Pre-Schools Wendy Dunston**

**Role of Signatory Chair**