



16. Safeguarding Children

Applies to: *All Staff, volunteers, committee members*

The protection of the children in our care is our first priority. Consequently, if any member of staff suspects that a child is suffering from one or more of the above forms of abuse, whatever the possible source of that abuse, then they must act quickly and responsibly on that suspicion. In particular they must report their suspicions to the pre-school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in that person's absence the Deputy DSL. To avoid unnecessary distress to the child or their Carers the staff member should not discuss their concerns with anybody else, including other pre-school staff.

If there is a concern about a child, whether it is an incident or an emerging pattern of concerns we have a duty to contact MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub). The concern will be discussed at Hub level and a decision on how to proceed will be taken and communicated back to pre-school. A written referral using the MASH referral form will also be required within 48 hours.

All written referrals must include:

- full details of the child and all other family members
- provide information about the family's circumstances, composition and history
- indicate which other agencies are involved with the family
- state whether, if known, there have been previous referrals to Social Services
- explain the reason for the child being referred, the exact nature of the concerns, why and how they have arisen
- discuss what assessment, support or services are considered to be needed
- clarify whether the Carers have been made aware of the concerns and whether they have given their consent for the referral.
- communicate any risk of violence or aggression towards the Social Services staff who will respond to the referral

To establish the basis and nature of any concern the DSL will conduct an investigation. The purpose of this investigation is not to determine whether abuse has occurred, but merely whether there is sufficiently strong evidence of concern that it might have to warrant a referral to Social Services. The investigation will normally involve discussing the concerns with the child's Key Person, and the staff member who raised the concern and, provided it would not cause undue distress to the child, any physical signs. If the DSO believes that there are legitimate grounds for suspicion, she will normally seek a meeting with the child's Carers as well as seeking advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

If she is concerned that informing the child's Carers of the suspicion may place the child at greater risk or compromise Police evidence, advice will instead be sought from Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police. If the meeting with the child's Carers fails to dispel the suspicion of abuse then, in accordance with Dorset County Council's referral policy, permission will normally be sought to make a referral to Dorset MASH. If the DSL decides not to make a referral, she must inform the staff member or members who have expressed concerns and explain her reasons for deciding not to proceed. These staff members have the right to make referrals directly to Social Services if they disagree with the outcome of the DSL's deliberations, though they are advised to seek guidance from LADO before doing so.

All pre-school Staff must co-operate fully with any subsequent investigation, whilst also recognising the sensitivity of the issue and the importance of avoiding further distress to the child and his family by maintaining strict confidentiality.

An allegation of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegations of abuse.

CSC takes the lead role in enquiring about Safeguarding Children issues related to the child whilst the Pre-School retains the responsibility for disciplinary actions related to their staff member, volunteer or parent/Carer.

Allegations against members of staff or volunteers

If an accusation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the same procedure will be followed, but in addition, OFSTED will be informed. If the accusation is made against the Head of Pre-School or the DSL, then the chairperson of the Preschool committee and St John's Safeguarding Lead must be informed, and the chairperson will execute this procedure in place of the DSL.

Procedure

- All members of staff regardless of their position within the Pre-School will be treated fairly and equally.
- Any allegation will be taken seriously.
- The DSL will inform the MASH team of the allegation, they will also inform the Chairperson of the committee. Their advice will be followed.
- This could, if deemed necessary, result in immediately removing the member of staff from the Pre-School whilst the allegation is investigated.
- The Pre-School Chairperson will confirm in writing to the member of staff concerned the details of the accusation and the action the Pre-School is taking.
- If the allegation is made against a volunteer or student, their college, school or agency will be informed immediately.
- The matter will be reported to Ofsted within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone connected to the setting.
- The matter will also be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Whistleblowing

All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues and recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Procedure

- Any such concerns should be raised with the DSL.
- The concern will be recorded by the person who raised the concern and DSL, or by the person who raised the concern if it involves the DSL.
- The matter will be referred to the MASH and their advice will be followed. .
- If the concern is about the DSL, the person raising the concern is responsible to report it to the Pre School Committee Chairperson who will refer it to the MASH or they should go directly and report it to the MASH, or in an emergency the police.
- If the concern is about a member of the Pre-School Committee, the person raising the concern is responsible to report it to the churches Safeguarding Officers, Andrew Morris or Pat Loveless who will refer it to the MASH or they should go directly and report it to the MASH .
- If no action is taken by the DSL and an individual member of staff is still concerned, it is their responsibility to contact the MASH directly, or in an emergency the police.
- The matter will be reported to the Pre-School Manager, Ofsted (within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone connected to the setting), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and St. John's Church Safeguarding Lead.

Disclosure by a child

Procedure

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- The child will be comforted and reassured that the person they are telling believes them.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace
- Ask open questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible - note date, time, place, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given witnesses to the conversation and any questions asked will be noted together with the responses given by the child. Ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- The DSL will be informed immediately. It is then their responsibility to pass on the information shared to MASH

Remember

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T – tell me • E – explain • D – describe | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive information 2. Respond to the child 3. Report to DSL 4. Refer to MASH 5. Record accurately (same day) |
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Confidentiality

St John's Pre-School promotes an environment of respect with reference to confidential information (see our Confidentiality Policy).

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents/Carers will be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy at the point of registration before their child starts Pre-School. Parents/Carers will be reassured that allegations against staff, students or volunteers, of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported to the CSC to investigate. The concern should be made to the DSL or if this person is the subject of the allegation, directly to the MASH.

At all times the child's well-being comes first. St John's Pre School has the right to seek advice, regarding a concern they may have about a child, before discussing this with the child's parent/carer. If the child is thought to be at risk of significant harm, or the concern is regarding physical or sexual abuse a referral may be made to MASH without having first discussed it with the parent/carer.

The Legal Framework

St John's Pre-School Safeguarding Children policy complies with its statutory duties under the following legislation:

The Children Act 1989
The children Act 2004
The Childcare Act 2006
The Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
Prevent duty 2015

What to do if you think a child is being abused 2015
EYFS Statutory frameworks 2017
Information sharing July 2018
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Contacts

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: Louise Coll
 Our Deputy Safeguarding Lead's Are: Hilary Paton
 Claire Dunford
 Local Authority Designated Person (LADO) is: Patrick Crawford
 Pre-School Chairperson is: Rev Peter Breckwoldt

MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) 01202 228866
Email: MASH@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk

Children's Social Care Local Office (Ferndown) 01202 877445
Out of hours service 01202 657279

Police Emergency 999

LADO – Patrick Crawford Direct Line 01305 221191

Early Years Advice Line 01305228425

Pre-School Chair Rev Peter Breckwoldt 01202 886551
vicar@stjohnswimborne.org.uk

Church Safeguarding Andrew Morris 01202 883421 / 07772801117
Pat Loveless 01202 880199 / 07980490033

United Nations on the Convention of the Rights of the Child

Article 19

'Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them'

Article 34

'The Government should protect children from sexual abuse'