

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

Alderton Acorns fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. This policy applies to all staff, committee and volunteers working for and in the setting.

Within this policy the term 'we' applies to the setting as a whole (staff, committee and volunteers) This policy is accompanied by a safeguarding folder which contains all the relevant documents and guidance on where to go to find more information.

Policy Statement

Our setting will work with children, parents, carers, the community and other outside agencies to ensure the safety of all children and to give them the very best start possible in life.

Aim

Our aims are to carry out this policy by ensuring children's rights and entitlements* are fully met.

*refer to Children's Rights and Entitlements Policy

Safeguarding Leads / Deputies

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and Safeguarding (DSL) at Alderton Acorns Pre-school is Stephanie Castle (Manager). The Deputy Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection and Safeguarding (DDSL) is Sian Tryner. The Committee member responsible for Child Protection and Safeguarding is Verity Lacey.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will be guided by two principles:

- In accordance with the Children Act 1989, the welfare of the child is always paramount.
- Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

The DSL is expected to be fully conversant with the procedures of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive (GSCE) www.gscb.org.uk, and to ensure that the Pre-school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The DSL must also make sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The DSL will work closely with other agencies as appropriate, as well as the GSCE, when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved will handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, remembering all the time that the interests of the child are of paramount importance.

Alderton Acorns ensures that all staff members maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned and that when issues arise about the welfare of a child, staff members always act in the interests of the child. Ensuring that within there is an understanding that **safeguarding is the responsibility of EVERYONE. If at any point there is immediate risk of serious harm to a child a referral must be made to social care immediately by contacting the Children and Families Helpdesk Front Door on 01452 426565, or dial 999. Anybody can make a referral.**

Method

- We will follow the procedures set out by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive (www.gscb.org.uk) and take account of guidance issued by the Department of Education.
- The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and deputy must undertake the GSCE multi agency training every 2 years. Other staff need to attend a Child Protection Course every 3 years.
- All members of staff are required to understand their responsibilities in being alert for signs of abuse and know who to turn to for help. Further guidance is available at www.gscb.org.uk.
- All applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service before posts

can be confirmed. Annually staff and volunteers sign an 'Ongoing Suitability to work with children' form at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). This ensures that 'we' continue to monitor suitability and check disqualification by association.

- 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 Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children. All applicants are expected to disclose this information during the recruitment process at the same time as referencing.
- All staff and volunteers are informed that they are required to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
- We keep a Single Central Record (SCR) which includes the following information; an identity check; a barred list check; an enhanced DBS check; a prohibition from teaching check; further checks on people living or working outside the UK; a check of professional qualifications; and a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act 1989 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 setting in a visitors log.
- 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.
- We will try to identify any families who would benefit from Early Help support and advice, and work with other agencies to identify and address their needs. GloSFamiliesDirectory.org.uk
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their

participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.

- All staff understand the principles of Early Help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2015) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- All staff understand *GCSE* thresholds of significant harm (see attached *Levels of Intervention*) and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard. (Escalation Procedure set out by *GCSE*)
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- We acknowledge that a child living in a home with domestic violence is being harmed.
- We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child or young person.

When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:

- significant changes in their behaviour;
- deterioration in their general well-being;
- their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
- changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;

- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- 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 DSL. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- If staff become aware that a child or young person is witnessing domestic abuse, they should always follow their child protection process.
- We are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care team.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
- We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and GSCE procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made by the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures. (set out by the GSCB www.gscb.org.uk)
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care team as set out in the GSCE Child Protection Process and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the GSCE
- We take account of the need to protect children and young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or

school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the same procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or young adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

- All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
(www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsab/useful-contacts/)
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
 - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the 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 personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the designated person (either the DSL or the DDSL in the event that the DSL is absent) is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day. The DSL will inform the committee member responsible for Safeguarding and child protection.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk, or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary, by phoning the Children and Families Helpdesk Front Door on 01452 426565
- Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the DSL should seek advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with agencies

- We work within the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive guidelines.
- We follow the GSCE Child Protection Process (see flowchart on website and in safeguarding folder) for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is available on the Government website (www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2) and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably

practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
 - inappropriate sexual comments;
 - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the *GSCE* and their Allegations Management procedure (see *GSCE* website and flowchart in Safeguarding folder) when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, 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 Designated Officer completing a referral form found on the *GSCE* website (LADO Nigel Hatten supported by Tracy Brooks and Jenny Kadodia) to allow and support an investigation. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.

- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended 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 volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.
- We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the GSCE, (every two years for the DSL and Deputy and every 3 years for other staff) and refresh their knowledge and skills regularly, reading and reviewing the safeguarding folder (annually). Safeguarding issues will be on the agenda at every staff meeting.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. In Alderton Acorns we aim to ensure that no child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers. Volunteers are not allowed to take children to the toilet.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe 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 an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, 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.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only on a need to know basis. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive.

Support for families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We recognise some families may need additional support and we will guide them towards the offer of Early Help. The purpose of Early Help is to prevent issues and problems becoming serious and harmful to the child, young person, family and community. It is about getting the right help at the right time before issues get worse.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.

- We will continue 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 child's social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their 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 in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

This policy was updated on 17th October 2019 (revision 2)

Date to be reviewed October 2020

Signed on behalf of the provider

