

# CHILD ABUSE / PROTECTION POLICY

This policy reviews signs and symptoms of possible abuse as well as outlining the Calthwaite Nursery's Procedure for dealing with abuse.

The Manager is the named people in charge of ensuring the Child Abuse Policy is adhered to.

Staff must be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. The four main types of abuse are:

- Physical abuse is intentionally causing physical harm to the child.
- Emotional abuse is where there is emotional harm to a child.
- Neglect means failing to provide for the basic essential needs of a child.
- Sexual abuse is the use of children, both boys and girls for sexual gratification.

In order to recognise abuse, staff need to be aware of the signs related to each of the aforementioned types and be aware of age-appropriate behaviour of the children.

## Abuse through observation:

Abuse can be detected through regular observation in a variety of situations. The child should not be aware staff are observing them as this might change the way they react in situations. If abuse is suspected staff must record the information as soon as possible and inform the Manager. The report must include:

- Name, age and address of child
- Parents' / careers' names
- Date and time of making the records
- Specify whether recording own concerns or someone else's
- Brief description of what caused your concerns, including incidents leading up to your concern.
- Description of any physical signs. Use a body map to indicate where the signs are. Signs should be reported accurately without judgements being made as to their cause.
- Description of any behavioural changes
- If the child has said anything, which has caused concern, **exactly**, what did they say, not what staff thought they meant.
- Has the parent given an explanation for any of staffs concerns.
- Details of who you passed the information onto.

Records, as with all records pertaining to the children, must be kept in a locked cabinet and accessible only to those concerned. Parents do have a right to see the records about their child, should they request to do so.

All observations need to be signed by two staff members.

## **Abuse through Disclosure:**

Along with recognising abuse through observation children could tell staff about the abuse, which could take the form of:

- A full disclosure: child relates all the history of abuse including names.
- A Partial disclosure: child tells only one part of the story.
- A Direct disclosure: child tells early years worker verbally or by using sign language what has happened.
- An Indirect disclosure: child might disclose abuse indirectly through play.

Staff must be aware of and able to recognise the different types of disclosures. Should a child make a disclosure to a member of staff the staff should take the allegations seriously, they should listen to the child, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling, praise the child for surviving the abuse, don't question the child or ask for details, don't promise confidentiality to the child, don't make value judgements about the abuser and explain to the child what you are going to do next and that you will let the child know what happens.

Should a disclosure be made staff must record everything as soon as possible. To be legally admissible the report needs to be made within 24 hours of the disclosure. The report needs to include:

- Child's name, age and address
- Date, Time and place of disclosure
- What the child was doing immediately prior to the disclosure. What may have prompted the disclosure?
- What the child said, EXACTLY, using the words the child used.
- Anything you said to the child before, during and after the disclosure
- Who you informed.

Records, as with all records pertaining to the children, must be kept in a locked cabinet and accessible only to those concerned. Parents do have a right to see the records about their child, should they request to do so.

Any cases of suspected abuse will be distressing for the staff involved, however staff can talk to the Manager, Chairman or trained councillor. They must remember the rules of confidentiality and not use names. They must also continue to behave professionally towards the suspected parent or carer.

## **Procedure to inform other bodies:**

Should abuse be suspected either through observation or disclosure, the Nursery Manager, (responsible for child protection in the setting), must inform the local Social Services Area Child Protection Unit Telephone: 01768 242200 immediately, the emergency out of hours number is: 01228 526 690.

Social Services, once informed, are legally required to investigate. They will also inform the police. The staff member may be called to participate in the case conference. The Committee

and staff member (s) involved in writing the reports of abuse will at all times assist social services and the police in their investigations.

### **Enabling children to protect themselves**

Through their teaching staff try to help the children become more independent and responsible for their own safety. That also means building the children's self-confidence and giving them the information to help them know what to do in unfamiliar situations.

Children will be taught, through incorporation into normal play and lessons that:

- Their bodies belong to them
- Emergency telephone numbers
- They have a right to privacy
- What to do when they get lost
- To express and trust their own feelings
- Stranger Danger
- How to cope with bullies
- Who they should be going home with
- To understand the difference between 'good' and 'bad' secrets
- An adult is always ready to listen

Parents will be informed when these issues are being discussed so they can discuss the topic at home as well as increase their own knowledge.

### **How Calthwaite Nursery Protects Children in its care**

Everything possible is done by the staff to ensure the well being of your child during nursery sessions.

The group is registered by **Ofsted**. All regular staff are registered with the above. All non-permanent people, helping or visiting, are under the supervision of the staff. If parents have any worries about individuals helping then they should speak to the Manager or any committee member, and the matter will be dealt with, and any necessary action taken.

Daily risk assessments are conducted inside and outside the building to ensure each play area is safe for both children, parents / carers, visitors and staff. Rules are laid down by staff to promote safety e.g. no throwing or fighting etc.

Children are closely monitored with a ratio of 1:8 for 3+, 1:4 for 2 - 3 year olds and 1:3 for under 2's. Children are supervised at all times in all activities.

### **Fire drill and evacuation procedures are practised regularly.**

Staff have first aid training. Please tell staff of any illnesses or allergies your child suffers from. Please tell staff about any medication your child is prescribed.

Families have the right not to have personal details passed to other people without their knowledge or consent. However, in child protection situations, it may be necessary to pass on the information about a child to investigating agencies without parental consent.

All children should be protected from harm and all staff and volunteers should know what actions to take if they observe, or have reported to them, possible evidence of abuse. Staff need to be committed to and vigilant in recognising the signs and symptoms that may raise suspicion of abuse.

Each member of staff must have a clear understanding of Calthwaite Nursery's policy on abuse and their responsibilities if suspicions of abuse are raised.

Allegations against a member of staff should be reported to the Manager or Chairman of the Trustees in the first instance, who will immediately act in accordance with the Calthwaite Nursery's Policies / Procedures and Employee Handbook.