



Safeguarding Policy Statement

Approved January 2024
Review January 2025

Context

The Legislative Framework underpinning this policy includes:

Children Act 1989/2004
Data Protection Act 2018
Child Care Act 2006
Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2015)
Children and Social Work Act (2017)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

We also take into account:

'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings.' (2016)

In compliance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), new safeguarding arrangements within local authorities had to be implemented by September 2019.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were replaced by new partnership arrangements led by senior leaders from Local Authorities, Police and Clinical Commissioning groups.

In Gloucestershire, this is the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP).

Scope.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, temporary and agency staff, higher education students, school students and young people on work experience, seconded staff and staff provided by commissioned services. All commissioned services provide evidence to the commissioners (GCC) that they comply with the requirements for safeguarding children. All contracted, sub-contracted or partnership delivered services are also required to show that they are compliant with safeguarding policies and arrangements.

Parents/carers who use the centre have access to all centre policies.

Our approach

The protection and well-being of children in our care is paramount. All staff have undertaken child protection training in the identification of welfare concerns and actions to be taken when addressing concerns of a safeguarding nature.

We provide an environment where children are helped to feel secure, are encouraged to talk and be listened to. All staff are advised to adopt an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

- Safeguarding is protecting the unborn, babies, children and young people from maltreatment; preventing the impairment of their physical, mental and emotional health or development. We aim to ensure that the children we work with grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, enabling them to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.
- We will continue to raise awareness of child protection issues and aim to equip children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe.
- All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

- Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm and neglect, it also includes: bullying, racism, harassment and discrimination, providing first aid, intimate care, meeting the needs of children with medical conditions and centre security.
- We recognise that it is our responsibility to work together with key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We will continue to develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse by referring to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Tel: (01452 426565)
- A ‘*Whistle Blowing Policy*’ and ‘*Allegations Management Policy*’ are in place.
- Written records of concerns about children are kept, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- All records are kept securely, in line with our security policy. ‘*Acceptable use of IT / Technology and Data Protection Policy*’
- The appropriate use of mobile phones and smart watches is ensured, i.e. phones are not to be used or kept within children’s groups and personal mobile phone numbers must not be shared with parents.
- Only centre equipment is used to take photographs and video recordings. Written parental consent is gained beforehand. Camera memory cards should not be taken home for use outside of the organisation. (See *Camera & Mobile Phone Policy*.)
- Children and adults are listened to, and we take their concerns seriously. If an adult voices concerns about a child to staff, these must be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- We actively discourage personal relationships between practitioners and parents outside of the setting, e.g. babysitting, social networking (i.e. Facebook, twitter), entering into sexual or romantic relationships. Staff are advised not to have social network site contact with parents or children.
- The welfare of the child is paramount and it is our fundamental duty to safeguard children. Loyalty towards colleagues or parents should not influence this.
- Safeguarding training undertaken by our staff is recorded and audited to ensure training is kept up to date.
- All staff, volunteers, sessional/agency staff, students working with children and young people or vulnerable adults have a DBS check completed prior to taking up a role in the centre.
- A record of staff DBS checks is maintained to ensure all staff have a refreshed DBS check every three years in accordance with good practice.
- A single central register (SCR) of current staff, Directors; and dates of DBS issued, is maintained.
- We are pro-active in maintaining effective communication and links with relevant agencies and co-operate with any enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences and core groups.

The Prevent duty

We have a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent

duty. Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Procedures: Please see Appendix 1, Safeguarding Procedures for details on identifying and reporting abuse.

IT safety.

- Please follow the 'Acceptable *Use of IT Technology and Data*' Policy

Safer recruitment.

- We ensure we practice safe recruitment in line with Government guidance and the local handbook by using at least one accredited recruiter on all interview panels.
- As part of the DBS process we check identity, nationality and immigration status.
- We provide a safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details (e.g. "*Recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices*").
- All posts advertised have up to date job descriptions and person specifications.
- Short listing is based on formal application forms and not CVs.
- All interview questions are based on job descriptions and person specifications.
- All interviews are carried out under equal opportunities principles.
- No formal offer of job is made until after two suitable references have been received. DBS clearance is obtained prior to staff starting employment, unless a written risk assessment is completed by the line manager, and adhered to.
- Employment history is checked (up to three years) and this includes employment references and verification of gaps in employment of six months or more.

Disqualification under the Children Act 2006 (revised 31/08/18).

Disqualification by Association now only applies in domestic settings.

Disqualification under the Child Care Act still applies to staff themselves who work in a child care capacity, whether paid, volunteer or are on work placements.

Relevant staff are those working in child care, or in a management role because they are: working with reception age children at any time; or working with children older than reception until age eight, outside school hours.

Our recruitment and vetting process, including the application of advanced DBS checks ensures that no person disqualified under the Childcare Act is employed by us to work with children.

All staff employed to work in our registered early years settings sign an annual declaration stating that they are not disqualified to work with children, under the Childcare Act.

How staff can protect themselves?

- All staff employed by the Aspire Foundation will receive an enhanced DBS check prior to commencement of their employment. This includes vetting of their identity, confirmation of nationality and immigration status. Verification of unspent criminal convictions follows a specific process which is signed off by a Senior Manager.
- Gaps in employment and employment history are clarified at the recruitment stage in line with safer recruitment.
- All students who have access to children at the centre will have received enhanced DBS clearance.
- Staff are supported to maintain up to date Child Protection training and knowledge.
- No physical sanctions must be used or encouraged by staff.
- All staff members attend child protection training during induction. An audit of child protection training attended is maintained and kept up to date.
- Policies are reviewed regularly at team meetings and are reviewed annually.
- Personal records are stored securely in a locked cabinet.

The Director with safeguarding responsibility for children's centres is Claire Price.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Locality is Maud McLoughlin – Operational Lead.
Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Children and Family Centres are:

- Kim Poole – Safeguarding and Triage Team Manager (Cheltenham)
- Kerry Sykes – Safeguarding and Triage Team Manager (Tewkesbury)
- Shelley Thomas – Community Partnerships Team Manager (Cheltenham)
- Emma Evans – Community Partnerships Team Manager (Tewkesbury)

Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Early Years settings is:

- Roz Nelson – Early Years Manager

Deputy Safeguarding Leads are:

- Daren Edwards – Early Years Lead (Gardners Lane)
- Paige Baker – Early Years Lead (Hesters Way)
- Karen McSorley – Early Years Lead (Oakwood)
- Emma Keeling – Early Years Lead (Rowanfield)
- Rachel McMahon – Early Years Lead (Noah's Ark)
- Louise Olver – Early Year Lead (Treetops and Parliament)

All **significant** safeguarding Incidents must be reported to OFSTED. See the *Early Years Compliance Handbook (updated 2022)* for specific details.

Accredited persons for safer recruitment are: Zena Drew, Maud McLoughlin, Roz Nelson, Jonathan Davies.

This policy will be reviewed annually and at any other time when the SMT request it or when changes to training, processes or best practice require it.

How will we check this?

Monitoring and review

- It is the responsibility of Strategic Leads to monitor and review the effectiveness of all the policies relating to the Children and Family Centres.

For further information contact

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01452 426565
- Safeguarding Children's Service 01452 583629
- Safeguarding Adult Helpdesk on 01452 426868