

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Addendum

### Arrangements for

### Whitsers Pre School

January 2021

#### Introduction

This addendum of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy contains details of our changed safeguarding arrangements during the current pandemic in order to protect all children, whether attending the setting or remaining at home, from harm and abuse.

The principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (Section 3 Safeguarding and Welfare requirements) and Working Together 2018 apply with regard to keeping children safe. Despite the changes, the setting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the Designated Person/s for Child Protection (DP) in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

Early Years Settings will remain open to all children as advised by government guidance 'National lockdown: Stay at Home', 4.1.21. Where it is not possible for children to attend, regular contact will be made by the setting to those with vulnerabilities (see 'Supporting Vulnerable Children' section of this document).

After School and Breakfast Clubs (Wrap Around Childcare) will open subject to staff availability (to be reviewed after February half-term) for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. This is in line with national expectations for primary and secondary schools as advised by the above government guidance.

Our setting is operating within the following national guidance:

- Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak Implementing Protective Measures in Education and Childcare Settings: Department for Education (DfE), 30.12.20
- National lockdown: Stay at Home: HM Government, 4.1.21

Our setting has a COVID-19 Risk Assessment that is regularly reviewed and updated in line with national guidance.

This guidance supports the Management Team and DPs in settings:

- With regard to safeguarding, the best interests of the child must always continue to be a priority
- A DP should always be available on site while the setting is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible a DP will be contactable by phone or email and all staff should have these contact details.
- If staff have a safeguarding concern about any child, they should continue to follow the setting's usual safeguarding procedures. This includes the Child Protection procedure which requires staff to advise a DP immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in setting or not. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.
- It is essential that unsuitable people are not able to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children.
- Children should continue to be protected when they are on line.

**Our Designated Persons for Child Protection are:**

**Name: Kate Thorburn**

**Name: Donna Lilley**

**Our Setting will;**

- Aim to have a DP on site when the setting is open (to be able to access relevant records and take the necessary action)
- Ensure there are contingency arrangements should the DP not be available (a DP is available by 'phone)
- Ensure all staff know who the DP is on a daily basis
- Ensure that the DP knows how to contact Children's Social Care and the Early Help Hub.

DP training is available for staff new to the role and DPs who require refresher training (recommended every 2 years) to support settings with the above responsibilities. DPs will continue to read and implement, as relevant, updates added to the Cambridgeshire Early Years and Childcare: Designated Person for Child Protection (PVI) Knowledge Hub and the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board communications and website.

## **Supporting Vulnerable Children**

We have put in place specific safeguarding arrangements in respect of the following groups:

- Children in Care
- Previous Children in Care
- Children subject to a child protection plan
- Children who have, or have previously had, a social worker. There is an expectation that children with a social worker **must** attend the setting (or another setting by arrangement), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children on the edge of Social Care involvement or pending allocation of a social worker. Where required these children will be offered a place at setting (or another setting by arrangement).
- Other children the setting considers vulnerable. More children may be added to this group in response to concerns raised with the DP. This may also include families where there is Domestic Abuse. These children can be offered care at the setting if required.

Each of the above children has an individual support plan which has been shared with other agencies involved in their care.

## **Maintaining Contact with Vulnerable Children Not Currently Attending**

We recognise that some children will not be attending our setting due to current government restrictions, this includes After School and Breakfast Clubs (Wrap Around Childcare). Other reasons for not attending may include self-isolation, shielding or parental choice.

- If our setting is closed or vulnerable children are absent the Designated Person (DP) should contact other relevant professionals to make them aware and agree any further action required. We will consider setting up a secure safeguarding email inbox that is accessible only to the DP and include their contact details on 'out of office' replies, phone messages and the setting website. This will enable partner agencies to contact the DP if necessary.
- For children who are currently on a Child Protection Plan (CP), the DP should have daily contact, ideally by phone. If there are any concerns, the DP should contact the child's social worker as normal.
- For children open to Social Care under Child in Need (CIN), the contact should be 2-3 times a week.
- If the child also attends school, the DP will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and agree who will make contact with children on CP or CIN Plans.
- For all other vulnerable children, the DP should have weekly contact and depending on the child's individual circumstances, more frequently if required.

- In exceptional circumstances, where a phone call may not suffice there may need to be some face-to-face contact, consider using Skype or similar platform.

### **General Attendance of all Children**

Where a child is expected at the setting and does not arrive, we will follow our attendance procedure and make contact with the family. If contact is not possible by 9:30am the DP will be informed. The DP will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (through a relative or other emergency contact etc.). If we are unable to make contact with a family about a child with whom we have concerns, after a reasonable number of attempts, we may need to seek further advice from other professionals about safe and well checks. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider how to manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** our duty to ensure children are safe.

### **Supporting Children in the Setting**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There may be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, poverty and financial or health anxiety. Supporting children's wellbeing will be at the forefront of our approach. Staff will talk to children about the changes to their life in an age appropriate manner, acknowledge and listen to their anxieties and support them to understand routines within the setting. Staff will be aware of the mental health of both children and their parents and carers, informing the DP about any concerns.

We recognise that for some children, home may not be a safe space. Staff have been reminded of the need to respond sensitively to children's differing experiences. Staff have been asked to be particularly vigilant for signs and indicators that suggest a child may have experienced abuse or neglect. Staff have been trained about how to manage a disclosure from a child, and understand that any safeguarding concerns, including those that relate any period of setting closure, must be referred immediately to a setting DP in the usual way.

### **Child on Child Abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to occur between children, especially in the context of a setting closure or partial closure. Our staff will remain vigilant to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, including those between children who are not currently attending our provision. Extra care should be taken where groups have mixed age, developmental stages, are attending other settings or schools as an interim measure and similar. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between children.

### **On-line Risks**

Children may be currently using the internet more. Staff will be aware of the signs and indicators of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were attending the setting.

- The setting continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the setting's staff code of conduct and

importance of using setting systems to communicate with children and their families.

- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the setting and the wider internet community. Parents have been offered the following links:
- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre

### **Allegations or concerns about staff**

We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern about colleagues, no matter how small, to the Ofsted Registered Person, Manager or DP.

All new permanent/temporary staff or volunteers will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of our safeguarding practices and know how to take action, using the setting procedures, if they are concerned. The arrangements to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Local Authority remain unchanged. The setting will continue to follow the duty to refer to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult as relevant.

### **An allegation may relate to a person who works or volunteers with children who has:**

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

If an allegation is made against a person who works or volunteers with children, the following action will be taken (as 'Allegation against a person who works or volunteers with children' flowchart and guidance):

The setting will ensure the immediate safety of the children.

- The setting will **not** start to investigate but will immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01223 727967.
- If the LADO decides the matter is a child protection case, external/internal agencies (e.g. police) will be informed by the LADO and the setting will act upon the advice given to ensure that any investigation is not jeopardised.
- The setting will notify Ofsted of a significant event
- It may be necessary for the employer to suspend the alleged perpetrator. Suspension is a neutral act to allow a thorough and fair investigation.
- If it is agreed that the matter is not a child protection case, the setting will investigate the matter themselves.

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the DP. They will be asked to read the setting Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Addendum, the Behaviour Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct. The DP will ensure new staff know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

If staff or volunteers are transferring in from other childcare settings for a temporary period to support the care of children, we will seek evidence from their setting that:

- the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers, and
- where the role involves regulated activity and the appropriate DBS check has been undertaken by that setting we will undertake a written risk assessment to determine whether a new DBS would need to be undertaken. It may be in these exceptional times we can rely on the DBS undertaken by their setting.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must be themselves in regulated activity, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and reasonable in all circumstances to protect the children.
- The setting will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with DBS guidance.
- When undertaking ID checks on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to initially check these documents online through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check. The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.

### **New children at the setting**

- Where children join our setting from other settings we will require confirmation from the DP whether they have a Child Welfare File or SEN statement/EHCP. This file must be provided securely **before** the child begins at our setting and a call made from our DP to the placing school/setting's DP to discuss how best to keep the child safe. In some unusual circumstance this may not be possible. Information provided must include contact details for any appointed social worker. Safeguarding information about children placed in our setting will be recorded using our safeguarding system. Information will be securely copied to the placing setting/school DP and will be securely returned to the placing setting on completion of the child's placement with us so there is a continuous safeguarding record for the child.
- The DP will undertake a risk assessment in respect of any new information received, considering how risks will be managed and which staff need to know about the information. This will be recorded on our safeguarding recording system.

## **Adoption of the policy addendum**

**This policy appendix was adopted for**

Whitsers Pre School

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**On:**

*6 January 2021*

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