

Coniston Early Years Centre Policy Document

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection
Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

Coniston Early
Years Centre



High Quality Care for All Children
A Firm Foundation for Education

1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy Statement.

Coniston Early Years Centre will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre School Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy. We also have regard to the policies and guidance provided by the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board when forming our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, and also encompass the advice and guidance of the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board.

Key commitment 1

The Alliance is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

Our designated Child Protection Officer isSarah Trussell..... (Manager) she is supported in her role byCheryl Francis..... (Deputy)

- In line with latest guidance will always have a designated Child Protection Officer on site.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children

- Whether children are on premises or taking part in Forest School sessions, at least two adults are always present.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks with an appropriate body subject to confirmation of the post
- All staff are registered with the DBS update service and as a result of this all staff DBS checks are checked annually for changes in circumstances that may affect their continued employment.
- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining 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 DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at Coniston Early Years Centre or has access to the children
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
 - The DBS check reference number
 - Date the disclosure was obtained
 - Details of who obtained the check
- We inform all staff that they are expected 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 abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would have otherwise lead to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern
- We have an evacuation procedure in place should a family member who is not legally allowed access to their child try to do so. All staff are aware of this procedure and it is flexible so that regardless of where the child is at the time of the unwanted person trying to gain access to them we are able to maintain the child's safety and security at all times
- 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 all records holding visual images of their child. (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)
- In order to prevent unlawful images of any child being taken we do not allow staff, students or visitors to the pre school to carry/use personal cameras or mobile phones within the pre school. All students and visitors are asked if they are carrying either a mobile phone or camera on their person when they enter the pre school and if they are it is removed from them and must remain in the office where it cannot

be accessed during their visit. Staff mobile phones are stored in their individual cubbies in the office and are only accessible to them when on a break. (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)

- We accept however that modern technology is such that a person may be carrying a mobile phone/camera on them that is not easily visible and that they may have failed to disclose they were carrying, in order to minimise the risk where this could be the case we ensure that no staff, student or visitor has unsupervised access to any child/children. (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)

The pre school has its own mobile phone used for outings and when contacting parents but this remains in the emergency box in full view of all staff working in the main pre school room, (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)

- The pre school also has its own cameras that are used for recording images to be used in the children's individual Learning Journey's and such images may also be used for display purposes both within the setting and beyond. Parents sign an agreement as to the use and storage of such photos when placing their child in Coniston Early Years Centre. (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)
- The images recorded for each child are also stored on a memory stick which is used by the manager to upload to the parent private facebook group. These are then transferred to the settings hard drive at the end of each month to maintain their security. They may also sometimes be stored on the computers in the office both of which are password protected to prevent unlawful access. Memory sticks for use in the pre school remain the property of the pre school and are not permitted to be removed from the setting unless express permission is sought and granted by a senior member of the team. Parental permission is sought in respect of the safety and security of such images. (see also our Use of Mobile Phones and Camera Policy)
- Parents are given a memory stick containing images of their child when the child leaves us.
- The settings hard drive is stored in a locked container with limited access to staff. Images are retained for a period of time in line with latest guidance. In exceptional circumstances this may happen off premises but once again express permission must be sought and granted for this to take place.

Checking visitor ID.

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting on our electronic registration system. These remain stored electronically for record keeping purposes.
- 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
- Staff always ask to see identity documents for any unexpected visitors to the pre school.

Key Commitment 2

The Alliance is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006)

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect
- 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)
 - Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
 - Any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the pre school
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability
- We are aware of other factors that can affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and female Genital Mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
- We recognise the increased safeguarding risks in extreme circumstances such as a pandemic and employ all options available to us to maintain contact with all families using methods such as emails, phone calls and our dedicated Facebook group. Where we know a family is already vulnerable additional contact will be made.
- We aim to find out as much as possible about the children in our care in order to enable us to identify those who may be at risk from various influences on their lives such as drugs, neglect, abuse or radicalisation. We see this as part of our wider safeguarding role. We do this in a subtle non-intrusive manner through questions asked at registration. We also use knowledge gained through general conversations with parents on a daily basis and at home visits. We are aware of and have regard for the Prevent Duty (June 2015)
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these

factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with

- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the latest procedures and local guidance for reporting child protection concerns
- 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 member of staff acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored in a confidential way in the child's personal file only accessible to staff within the pre school.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and cooperate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

We take account of the need to protect 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 procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the pre school may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

Whistleblowing

- Whistleblowing is when someone who works in or for an organisation passes on information, which they reasonably believe shows wrongdoing or a cover-up by that organisation. For example, the information may be about activity that is illegal or that creates risks to the health and safety of others. The concern may relate to something that has happened, is happening or that a person may fear will happen in the future.
- All staff are made aware of the need to expose any concerns they have about any child or member of staff and Whistle Blowing is discussed at induction.
- Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation. Raising a concern is known as "blowing the whistle" and is a vital process for identifying risks to people's safety.
- Sharing information or talking through a concern can be the first step to helping an organisation identify problems and improve their practices.
- It is important for individuals to feel safe and listened to when raising concerns. An open approach to whistleblowing promotes the values of openness and transparency and encourages employees to treat service users with dignity, respect and

compassion. In that way, the wellbeing and safety of service users and the provision of good care become part of the culture, and are seen as "the way we do things around here".

- From the employer's point of view, there are good business reasons for listening to workers who raise concerns, as it gives an opportunity to stop poor practice at an early stage before it becomes normalised and serious incidents take place. Whistleblowing has been shown to be an effective way to achieve service improvement, which has led to better practice.
- From the workers' perspective, the freedom to raise concerns without fear means that they have the confidence to go ahead and "do the right thing". It is part of encouraging workers to reflect on practice as a way of learning.
- Where a member of staff, visitor, child, parent or any other person connected with the pre school whistle blow we will defer the SGCP board guidance to ensure we deal with the matter in line with the most up to date guidance that is available.

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 wellbeing; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
 - Listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that they will take action
 - Does not question the child
 - Makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or 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.
 - We have a designated form for this process a copy of which is attached to this policy and copies are available to staff should the need arise.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child protection file, which is kept securely and confidentially in the office.

- The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity
- Where the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- We follow the procedures set out in the document 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' when reporting child abuse
- We have specified forms to use when recording concerns about a child and for recording disclosures made by children.
- Our duty social care team can be contacted through Access and Response Team (ART) on 01454 866000 or on the Emergency Duty Team contact number 01454 615165

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger
- We inform parents when we make a record of concern in their child's file and 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 South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board does not allow this, for example where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the social worker will inform parents
- All injury on arrival/child protection concerns will be logged on our CPOMS system. You have the right to see your child's CPOMS record at any time.

Liaison with other agencies

- We work within the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board guidelines
- We have the current version of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and ensure that all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns
- All staff receive the summarised version of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' as part of their induction into the pre school
- We follow the guidelines from the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Resolution of professional differences document October 2020 where differences of opinion arise or those involved are unable to reach an agreement for any reason.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, due to the ever changing nature of information in this digital age we will take the information from the VLE so as to be sure of using the most up to date and appropriate contact details for each agency. We aim to ensure that the pre school and children's social care are able to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (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.

- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) will also be sought electronically should the need arise.

Allegations against staff

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the pre school, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the pre school, which may include an allegation of abuse

- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children which includes:
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff we follow the guidance of the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the pre school, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the pre school, has abused a child
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the pre school, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the pre school, 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 (LADO) to investigate

.....Tina Wilson

We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, 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 chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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 the 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 Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) 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

Key commitment 3

The Alliance is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the pre school to ensure they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals

- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board
- We ensure all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the pre school

Planning

- The layout of the rooms allows as much as possible for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- We introduce the key elements of keeping children safe into our curriculum 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 pre school a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, language spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We promote Fundamental British Values in our work with the children whilst still maintaining a healthy respect for the culture and traditions of non-British families that use our setting.

- 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 with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group
- 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 ensure all of our policies are available to parents by emailing them to them when their child joins the pre school. We also aim to regularly post updated policies onto our Facebook page and also to our website.

We will continue to welcome the child and 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 care worker in relation to the pre schools 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 South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Board.

Legal Framework

Primary Legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) Secondary Legislation
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2021 **Further Guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (with an update in 2022)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- DfE Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners, 2018
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years education and skills settings 2019
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused March 2015
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Resolution of professional differences document October 2020
- South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership website
- South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership Thresholds Guidance – The Right Help in The Right Way at The Right Time, January 2021
- Protect - Speak up, stop harm - Free, confidential whistleblowing advice
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line - Support for professionals who are worried about how child protection issues are being handled in their workplace.
- Whistleblowing for Employees (GOV.UK)
- Raising Concerns with Ofsted about children's social care services: Policy and guidance for whistleblowers (GOV.UK)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

Reviewed by

Manager Date

Staff Date

Trustees Date

