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Child Protection Policy

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form. We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust practices in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the setting's other policies and practices.

Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023

Childcare Act 2006 (as amended in 2018)

Children Act 2004

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2023').

Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

The setting is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse. Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed, in the best interests of the child.

The setting aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and practices, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and practices and kept informed of changes to local/national practices – we use the acronyms PENS to help staff remember the different types of abuse, and TED to support good practices when dealing with a child's disclosure
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with practices set out by the Local Authority Safeguarding Board (LASB).
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of setting staff
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children, or living or working on the setting premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and practices when they register with the setting and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or practices issued by the LASB.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

Contact Telephone Numbers

Dorset single point of contact for professionals to report safeguarding concerns about a child – Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) – 01305 228558 (available 8am-10pm Monday to Sunday)

Dorset Out of Hours Service – 01305 221000

Dorset LADO – 01305 221122 - lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

In an emergency, or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999

Ofsted Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Staffing and Volunteering

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the setting to care for children and who has an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We do not allow volunteers to be alone with children or any other adult who may be present in the setting regardless of whether they have a DBS clearance.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the practices for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the setting. During induction staff will be given contact details for the LADO (local authority designated officer), the local authority children's services team, the LASB and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

We have a named person within the setting who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and coordinates child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There will always be a DSL available to our settings during opening hours. The setting DSL liaises with the LASB and the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field.

Informing Parents

Each case is looked at on an individual bases and it is usual that the parent/carers will be the first point of contact when there has a disclosure or reason to believe suspicion of abuse.

However, in the following situation we will follow the guidance of the LASB/local authority children's care team or Police before contacting the parents/carers:

- If the abuser is likely to be a parent or close family member
- Where a child may be endangered further by contacting the parent/carer

In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the LASB.

Support to Families

The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within the setting.

The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with guidance of the LASB with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Employees, students or volunteers of the setting or any other person living or working on the setting premises

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the setting premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the setting premises or elsewhere, the allegation will be reported to the Director. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the DSL instead.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted and the LASB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly.

Our setting has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Directors at the earliest opportunity.

Intimate Care

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we believe that all children need contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow and develop socially and emotionally. At times children need to be comforted, encouraged, held and offered physical reassurance.

Intimate care routines are essential throughout the day to meet children's basic needs. This may include nappy changing, supporting children with toileting, changing clothes, and giving first aid treatment and specialist medical support, where required.

To maintain the child's privacy, we will carry out most of these actions on a one-to-one basis, wherever possible, by the child's key person except for first aid treatment which must be carried out by a qualified first aider.

We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of children during intimate care routines and safeguard them against any potential harm as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently.

If any parent or member of staff has concerns or questions about intimate care practices or individual routines, please see the manager at the earliest opportunity.

Safe Care and Practice

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we believe that all children need to feel safe, secure and happy. This involves setting staff being responsive to children's needs, whilst maintaining professionalism. This includes giving children comfort and changing children's nappies or clothes.

If a parent or member of staff has concerns or questions about safe care and practice practices or behaviour, they consider as inappropriate, including between staff members, they are urged to see the manager at the earliest opportunity. Management will challenge inappropriate behaviour in line with the supervision/ disciplinary or whistleblowing practices. If the concern relates to the manager and/or setting owner, then parents should contact Ofsted or the local authority children's social care team – telephone numbers as listed before.

If a child has not been collected from the nursery after one hour without contact from parent/carer, the person in charge will ring the local authority children's social services emergency duty team.

We will follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts – we will request a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers. We will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use our professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration will be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Whistleblowing

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we expect all our colleagues, both internal and external, to always be professional and hold the welfare and safety of every child as their paramount objective.

If, in the course of your employment, you become aware of information or have observed practices which you reasonably believe indicates that a child is/may be or is likely to be in risk of danger and/or one or more of the following may be happening, you MUST use the setting's disclosure practice set out below:

- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject (e.g. EYFS)
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered
- That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any of the above, has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

We expect all team members to talk through any concerns they may have with their line manager at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems are resolved as soon as they arise.

Alternatively, Team members may approach the Chair or Vice Chair.

Camera, Mobile Phone and Recording Device Use

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we recognise that photographs and video recordings play a part in the life of the setting. We ensure that any photographs or recordings taken of children in our setting are only done with prior written permission from each child's parent. We obtain this when each child is registered, and we update it on a regular basis to ensure that this permission still stands.

We ask for individual permissions for photographs and video recordings for a range of purposes including use in the child's learning journey; for display purposes; for promotion materials including our setting website, brochure, social media and the local press.

We ensure that parents understand that where their child is also on another child's photograph, but not as the primary person, that may be used in another child's learning journey.

If a parent is not happy about one or more of these uses, we will respect their wishes and find alternative ways of recording their child's play or learning.

Staff are not permitted to take photographs or recordings of a child on their own cameras, mobiles or other devices and may only use those provided by the setting. The setting manager will monitor all photographs and recordings to ensure that the parent's wishes are met.

Parents are not permitted to use any recording device or camera (including those on mobile phones) on the setting premises without the prior consent of the manager.

During special events, e.g. Christmas or leaving parties, staff may produce group photographs to distribute to parents on request. In this case we will gain individual permission for each child before the event. This will ensure all photographs taken are in line with parental choice. We ask that photos of events such as Christmas parties are not posted on any social media websites/areas without permission from parents of all the children included in the picture.

Mobile Phone and Social Networking

At Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we promote the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We believe our staff should be completely attentive during their hours of working to ensure all children in the setting receive good quality care and education. To ensure the safety and well-being of children we do not allow staff to use personal mobile phones during working hours. We use mobile phones supplied by the setting to provide a means of contact in certain circumstances, such as outings.

We require our staff to be responsible and professional in their use of social networking sites in relation to any connection to the setting, setting staff, parents or children. We strongly advise staff not to 'friend' any parents on social media (unless this relationship existed before using the setting). We ask parents and visitors to respect and adhere to our policy.

Parents' and Visitors' use of Mobile Phones and Social Networking

Whilst we recognise that there may be emergency situations which necessitate the use of a mobile telephone, in order to ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care and share information about the child's day, parents and visitors are kindly asked to refrain from using their mobile telephones whilst in the setting or when collecting or dropping off their children.

We promote the safety and welfare of all staff and children and therefore ask parents and visitors not to post publicly or privately information about any child on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. We ask all parents and visitors to follow this policy to ensure that information about children, images and information do not fall into the wrong hands.

Parents/visitors are invited to share any concerns regarding inappropriate use of social media through the official practices (please refer to the complaints policy).

Prevent Duty

From 1st July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Here at Beaminster Preschool Charity Ltd. we take Safeguarding very seriously, therefore, to ensure that we adhere to and achieve the Prevent duty we will:

- Provide appropriate training for staff as soon as possible. Part of this training will enable staff to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation.
<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>
- We will build the children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views through promotion of their personal, social and emotional development as well as their understanding of the world.
- We will assess the risk, by means of a formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.
- We will ensure that our staff understand the risks so that they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
- We will be aware of the online risk of radicalisation with social media and the internet.
- As with managing other safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection (children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views). The Key Person approach means we already know our key children well and so we will notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.
- We will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life, but we will act when we observe behaviour of concern. The key person approach means that we already have a rapport with our families so we will notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.
- We will work in partnership with our LASB for guidance and support.
- We will build up an effective engagement with parents/carers and families. (This is important as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation).
- We will assist and advise families who raise concerns with us. It is important to assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms.
- We will ensure that our DSL's will undertake Prevent awareness training annually (as a minimum) so that they can offer advice and support to other members of staff.
- We will ensure that any resources used in the setting are age appropriate for the children in our care and that our staff have the knowledge and confidence to use the resources effectively.