

SHIRLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Shirley Children's Centre is:
Katie Coomber Interim Universal Services Coordinator (USC)

This policy links to the following:

- Use of Children's Centres by other agencies
- Home visiting and lone-working
- Volunteers
- Confidentiality policy and guidelines
- First aid
- Partnership with parents and the local community
- Health & Safety Policy

Document Control

Amendment History

Version/Issue Number	Date	Author	Remarks/Reason for change	Review Date
1	October 2014	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	To be ratified by the governing body	October 2015
2	October 2015	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Reviewed and updated	October 2016
3	October 2016	Eyullahemaye Henry-Miller	Reviewed and updated	October 2017
4	October 2017	Yvonne Charalambous	Reviewed and updated	October 2018
5	October 2018	Nicky Cook & Katie Coomber	Reviewed and updated	October 2019

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with Croydon's MASH procedures available online at <https://www.practitionerspacecroydon.co.uk/safeguarding> or by contacting the MASH Consultation Line on 020 8726 6464.

Shirley Children's Centre wants to work with children and their families to ensure the safety of children and to ensure that they achieve better outcomes and the best possible start in life.

We will focus on building open, trusting, supportive and respectful relationships with the families we serve.

2. Aim

Shirley Children's Centre will:

- Create an environment which encourages children to develop a positive self image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background
- Help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families with peers, and with other adults
- Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence
- Enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches
- Work with parents/carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all children

3. Scope

- This policy applies to everyone in the centre including staff, volunteers, families and visitors
- 'Staff' includes both those employed by Croydon Council as well as those from other agencies (e.g. the Health Service, and Job Centre Plus) who provide services for the centre, as part of the multi-agency approach to service delivery. This applies to staff from the statutory and non-statutory sector; the latter includes private, voluntary and independent groups
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the Centre is the Universal Services Coordinator (USC)

4. Legal context

This policy is covered by:

- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2006, Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Early Years Foundation Stage Principles 2011 & 2018: **Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to 5**
- Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 & 2018
- Information Sharing: A Guide for People Working with Children, Young People and Families 2015
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Sure Start Children's Centre Practice Statutory Guidance 2013
- DfES Code of Practice 2014

This policy also takes account of:

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018 GDPR

5. Mandatory systems and procedures

Recruitment and Staffing Procedures

- Applications for staff and volunteer positions are exempt from the 1974 Rehabilitation Act (above), and therefore have to declare previous convictions. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. If an applicant is rejected because of information which has been disclosed in the checks, s/he has a right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- All applicants have police checks by the Disclosure Bureau Services (DBS)
- References are checked and gaps in employment history are explored
- We abide by Ofsted requirements regarding references and police checks for staff and volunteers, so that no disqualified or unfit person works at the centre or has access to children
- Volunteers do not work with children unsupervised
- No unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- Details of all visitors to the centre are requested, and there are security steps in place to prevent unauthorised access to the centre. In the case of unauthorised access to the site, the Police will be called if necessary
- We respect all requirements in the 1999 Protection of Children Act regarding any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal, for reasons of child protection concern

- Adequate staff ratios are observed in accordance with Ofsted requirements for childcare
- At induction new staff are taken through all the procedures concerning child protection and safeguarding, so that if an incident arises, all staff know how to react. All staff undertake Safeguarding training within their probation period.
- All safeguarding training for staff is reviewed annually in line with the appraisal process.
- There is an established process for contacting Children's Social Care, and the relevant contact numbers are easily located in case of emergency.
- The centre has access to the Croydon Council's Child Protection Number which is available for staff, volunteers and families to see.

Legislation Review – The Independent Safeguarding Authority has changed the disclosure and barring arrangements. The changes came into effect on 1st September 2012. For more information please visit the ISA website at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/corporate-publications/disclosure-and-barring-changes/>

or the ISA website at:

www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

Good Practice in Family Sessions

- Parents will be responsible for their own children during family sessions unless they are in an identified separate crèche. Sessions/ rooms will display notices to that effect
- In the case of crèche, all childcare staff will hold a minimum NVQ level 2 childcare qualification while the leader will hold a level 3 or equivalent. In addition, all Ofsted requirements will be observed. In line with Ofsted requirements for registrations the crèche facility will not last for longer than 2 hours
- Only the child's parent, or a CRB checked adult may take a child to the toilet or complete any intimate procedures i.e. toileting and changing.
- Centre staff and volunteers will be required to ensure that all sessions adhere to the principles of good practice regarding Health and Safety in line with Shirley Children's Centres Health and Safety Policy.
- The centre will not tolerate smacking or physical punishment of any kind by staff, volunteers or families. Staff will challenge such behaviour appropriately & decisively, while also offering alternative strategies and support. They will involve other members of the centre staff as necessary

Dealing with Allegations or Concerns – Procedures

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, s/he will

- Offer reassurance to the child
- Listen to the child
- Give reassurance that action will be taken

Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

- In line with Child Protection Procedures staff will: **Notice, Listen, Record and Refer** all suspicions
- It is acknowledged that abuse of children can take many different forms; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Even if a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, staff will make the appropriate referrals
- Staff will deal with children in these circumstances with particular sensitivity. Moreover, staff will take great care not to influence the outcome of any suspicion or concern either in the way that they speak to children, or in the questions that they might ask
- If staff members are unsure of how to proceed, or indeed whether they should proceed, they must speak to the USC who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There should be no delay with this, since this might threaten the welfare of a child in an emergency situation
- If the USC is unavailable then advice can be sought from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8726 6464
- For immediate concerns with safeguarding contact MASH on 020 8255 2888 and or email childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk. staff must always let the DSL know if they have made a referral
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Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Examples of possible indicators of abuse that staff should be aware of include:

- Any changes in the child/ren's behaviour or appearance;
- Remarks made by the child or his/her parents or friends;
- Indications that the family is under extreme stress

In these cases it would be acceptable for Children's Centre staff to discuss this initially with the child/ren's parent/carer, **unless doing so may place the child at further risk**. Examples of these exceptions may include incidents of Fabricated or Induced Illness. Again, guidance is sought from the Universal Services Coordinator (DSL).

In all cases staff must consider whether a record may need to be made. If this is the case, then the following should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident or conversation:

- The child's name
- The child's address
- The age of the child

- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure
- The exact words spoken by the child
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time
- The names of any other person present at the time

If the conversation is undertaken on the telephone the same procedure will apply, and if necessary will become a referral with immediate action.

All concerns should be logged on safeguarding disclosure sheets. All staff should have access to blank incident forms. These will be kept in a central location in the Children's Centre. If the form is completed electronically, the information must be kept in a password encrypted file on the Children's Centre server and not on the hard drive of a PC or laptop. If the information is recorded on a memory stick, the device must be encrypted and the information transferred to the children's centre server in a password encrypted file without delay after recording. Once completed, the form will be printed off, signed and dated by the staff member and then shared with the relevant line manager on the same day. If the staff member is from a commissioned agency or from the Health Service, action is taken through that external agency, while also informing the Children's Centre Manager. The respective line manager will then decide if a referral is needed to the Children's Social Care Contact Centre. If this is the case, then s/he will be responsible for informing the Designated Person for Safeguarding who will decide if a referral is to be made, again on the same day.

Allegations against staff

The same guidance from Croydon Council is followed when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child. This would involve using similar disclosure and recording procedures just as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

All allegations against staff need to be reported to Universal Services Coordinator initially, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Steve Hall 020 8726 6000 extension 84322. Ofsted will also need to be informed on 0300 123 4666 (8.00am – 6.00pm). Ofsted **must** be informed within 14 days of receipt of the allegation.

Informing Parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact **unless doing so may place the child at further risk**
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed directly after the report is made

Complaints

- We will ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about staff or volunteer activity within the centre, which may include an allegation of abuse
- This will be done by use of appropriate signage and written guidelines made available for all families using services in the Children's Centre

For general information on OfSTED and how to make a complaint visit www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents or ring the helpline on 0300 123 1231

6. Implementation, methods

Liaison with other Bodies

- All staff in the centre work within the Croydon Council's Child Protection Procedures. Information is available within the children's centre
- All staff members have Croydon's Child Protection number on their desks for easy access.
- There is a clearly defined procedure for contacting the Child Protection Team. This will ensure that in an emergency the Children's Centre and Child Protection Team can work effectively together
- If a report on a family is made to the Child Protection Team, the Children's Centre will act within Croydon's Child Protection Procedures in deciding whether to inform the child's parents at the same time
- For staff working with families during out of hours contact (1700 – 0830) the Emergency Duty Team is available in emergency situations, on **020 726 6400** (24 hrs). Involving the Police is appropriate if immediate support is needed. The Police can also be contacted routinely on **101** or, in an emergency, on **999**
- Should a member of staff be involved in an out of hours emergency contact, then the Universal Services Coordinator must be informed as soon as possible on the same or following day with a full account of the incident which needs to be completed in writing
- Approaches to Children's Centre staff from the Police, CAFCASS (Children and Families Court Advisory Support Service) or solicitors regarding families, must be passed to the Universal Services Coordinator for an initial response. Staff should not give interviews to anyone alone either by telephone, mail, or in person, and if needed, will be supported by the Universal Services Coordinator who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Centre.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is a priority for Shirley Children's Centre. All documented concerns and allegations are kept confidential and shared only with key members of staff on a need to know basis; such staff will ensure that their own record-keeping is appropriate to their level of professional responsibility
- Any information which needs to be shared falls strictly under the guidance of Croydon Council's Information Sharing documentation. In cases of child protection then everything must be shared with the Children's Social Care Team.
- Parental consent must be given before liaison with other agencies (e.g. the Health Service) outside the Children's Centre in the absence of child protection concerns
- Refer to the Children's Centre policy on Confidentiality

Family Support

- The Children's Centre takes every step within its power to build up trusting and supportive relations with families, staff and volunteers. With the provision that the care and safety of the child is paramount, the Children's Centre will always do everything in its power to support and work with the child/ren's family
- In the event of any child protection investigation and subject to a satisfactory health and safety risk assessment, family support and child support will continue to be made available for families

Record Keeping

- Any records that need to be kept on a child will be kept in a safe, secure and confidential location determined by the USC
- The contents of these records will only be available to staff who have a legitimate need, or right, to view them
- They should contain any concerns and/or discussions about the child, decisions made, and also the reasons for those decisions; they should be based on actual fact rather than opinion and speculation
- All notes made should be signed legibly, dated and kept in order. There should also be an up-to-date chronology which reflects this process
- Each child should have an allocated lead worker in the relevant agency with full contact details
- Paper records are acceptable in the first instance.

Mobile/Camera Phones

The use of modern technology to support children's learning and development and ensuring that children are kept safe can cause a conflict for both staff and parents.

To ensure the children in the Children's Centre benefit from technology and reassure parents procedures are in place to keep their children safe the following steps will be taken:

- Staff and volunteers must leave personal mobile/camera phones and cameras in the office during opening hours
- Parents and visitors to the Centre will not be left unsupervised looking after other people's children
- No photographs will be taken of children in activity sessions, even if the parent is taking a photo of their own child as there is no guarantee that another child may not wander into the photo and be identified later on.
- Staff and volunteers must use the Children's Centre or School telephone number as first point of contact in an emergency
- The USC will authorise the use of the Centre camera. This should only be used for recording activities and children's development. Any video footage or pictures must be transferred to a secure, appropriate file on the children's centre server. No pictures must ever be left on the centre camera or memory card.
- Children will not be photographed or videoed for children's centre promotional activities unless prior permission has been received in writing from the parent or carer with main parental responsibility.

- Any parent that does not wish their child to be photographed for children's centre promotional purposes will be identified to ensure their picture is not taken by mistake.

Internet Access/Use

The internet can provide valuable information for supporting staff development, improving quality delivery and as a learning tool for children and young people. While the benefits are recognised we also have to consider the possible misuse.

To ensure that children's centre staff, volunteers, children and young people benefit from this resource and reduce inappropriate use thereby keeping children safe the following steps will be taken:

- Staff and volunteers must first seek permission from the USC to use the internet other than for agreed websites for the purpose of their role
- The USC will ensure that each computer used has software installed for blocking the use of inappropriate websites
- In the event that a volunteer or parent is using the computer in the office the door must be left open or ajar. Volunteers and parents must not be left to use a computer in the children's centre office unsupervised.
- The computer suite will only be accessed by visitors at the designated times
- Young children will only have supervised access to selected programmes
- Children and young people must first seek permission from the USC before using the computer.

Staff Training

The USC will ensure that all staff members understand the procedures for recording and reporting their concerns around child protection. Training is provided for all staff and volunteers to help them recognise children who may be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm and to understand their own, and others' role, with such children. This will include their responsibilities to these children.

Mandatory training will be held every year and focus on:

- The recognition of signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect
- Croydon Council's guidelines for making a referral
- The procedures for recording and reporting concerns in the centre
- The responsibility to contribute, as necessary, to multi agency assessments, planning and provision for vulnerable children and families
- The correct way to record details on a child's file in line with Croydon's Safeguarding Board procedures

7. Monitoring and reviewing

It is the responsibility of the Universal Services Coordinator to monitor and review the effectiveness of all policies relating to the centre

The USC will review and update this policy in accordance with the information outlined in the document history

The USC will update and amend this policy and its procedures in line with any emerging and relevant government legislation or Croydon Council guidance

It is intended that by adopting this policy and keeping staff, volunteers, families and the management committee informed, trained and up-to-date with procedures, the centre can avoid the need for complaints.

However, the USC is the first point of contact should you have any queries over this policy and its related procedures

Policy endorsement

This policy is agreed and signed by the governing body of Forest Academy