



Safeguarding Young Children and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of 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 2013').

Staff and Volunteers

At The Ark we have a named person within the nursery that takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) is Joanne Crowther (Nursery Manager) and in her absence the room leaders who undertake specific training and receive regular updates within this field. In addition to this there is always a named designated person on duty during all opening hours of The Ark. These designated persons receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an on-going basis, but at least once a year.

The designated safeguarding co-ordinators liaise with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and the Multi Agency Screening Service (MASS). They undertake specific training, including a child protection-training course and receive regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge of all staff within the team.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. We have 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 Nursery Manager and in her absence the Operations Director (see Whistleblowing Policy).

Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe. In order to ensure this we

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- 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.

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (cross reference *staff and volunteering policy*)



Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children 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.

The nursery aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of nursery staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are trained, from induction, to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, 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 i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour – This is covered at staff induction and formal mandatory staff training
- Ensure that staff understand how to recognise early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures-this is covered twice yearly at our internal staff training days and via the staff safeguarding / child protection display board which is located in the staff room
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur –this forms part of the parent welcome pack and is covered at parent induction
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the staff behaviour policy
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate

Child protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm and is an integral part of safeguarding children and promoting their overall welfare.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Types of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.



Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning; where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries – these should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the nursery manager

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult / carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England, including its effect on the child and other siblings involved. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as psychological concerns. In the event of concerns regarding this, the usual procedure will be followed. There is a mandatory duty to report to the police where an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, we will ensure that this is followed in our setting.

Breast Ironing

This is a process undertaken within some cultures in order to reduce the size or development of breasts. Carried out upon young girls it is believed that this procedure will protect them from harassment, rape, forced early marriage and will enable them to remain in education. The process involves the use of large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over scorching coals to compress the breast tissue of girls as young as nine years old. As this is a form of physical abuse it is important that practitioners working with children and young people are aware of the procedure and follow the LSCB guidelines.

***Sexual abuse***

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'Written Records' will be followed.

We will be aware of the possibility of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the signs and symptoms that may be displayed. If we have concerns, we shall follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate. As this mainly happens with older children we will have heightened awareness within our out of school / holiday club.

Emotional abuse

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation and failure to seek medical treatment when required on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is



not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

We are aware that peer on peer does take place so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and we will take advice from the appropriate agencies.

Monitoring Attendance

Although it is not compulsory for children to attend The Ark, under our safeguarding responsibilities we are required to monitor children's attendance and patterns of absence. If a child is not going to attend a session, we ask that parents / carers inform us of the reason for and the length of absence. This information is recorded within our chronologies and enables us to monitor non-attendance across The Ark. This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know they are safe.

Extremism – the Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police. This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in The Ark) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care. Alongside this we will be alert to any signs in children and families who may be at risk of radicalisation, on which we will act and document all concerns when reporting further.

e-Safety

At The Ark we are aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However, we are also aware of the dangers and strive to support children, staff and families in using the internet safely. Within The Ark we do this by:



- Ensuring we have appropriate anti-virus and anti spyware software on all devices and update these regularly
- Ensuring content blockers and filters are on our computers, laptops and any mobile devices
- Ensure management monitor all internet activity
- Using approved devices to record / photograph within the setting
- Never e-mailing personal or financial information
- Reporting e-mails with inappropriate content to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk)
- Ensuring children are supervised when using internet devices
- Using tracking software to monitor suitability of internet usage (for older children)
- Integrating e-safety into daily nursery practice by discussing computer usage rules, deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online
- Talking to children about stranger danger and deciding who is a stranger and who is not, comparing people in real life situations to online friends
- Not using SKYPE, Facetime or equivalent mediums
- Monitoring children's computer time, ensuring they remain safe online and only have access to material that promotes their development.

Written Records

In the event of any apparent changes in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a confidential record will be set up. This will be kept separate from the usual records kept on the child's development and progress. This record will include (in addition to the name, address and age of the child), timed and dated observations, describing the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation. Where possible it will also include details of the exact words spoken by the child. It will be signed and dated by the person making the record. Such records will be kept separate and will not be available to people, other than those directly connected.



Prevent abuse by means of good practice

- To ensure that all staff understands their responsibilities in child protection matters, we will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved at The Ark. This will make sure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and domestic violence
- Staff receive initial and on-going training in Safeguarding Young Children
- Staff have the opportunity to discuss any concerns regarding children or parents at any time. Staff are reminded of this at all training days (twice yearly) and any concerns are recorded and reviewed at 8-weekly Team Leader Meetings.



- Staff are made aware of and adhere to the rules regarding mobile phones and social networking (see Mobile Phone & Social Networking Policy)
- Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups
- Adults who have not had all the satisfactory checks will not be left alone with children
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding ways to express their feelings. This will enable the children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches
- The layout of the rooms will allow supervision of all the children at all times
- It will be made clear to applicants for posts within The Ark that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- All applicants for work within the nursery (whether paid or unpaid) will be interviewed prior to appointment and will be asked to provide details of two referees
- They will also be subject to an enhanced disclosure completed by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Explanations will be sought from those with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another
- All appointments will be subject to a suitable probationary period



Family Support

- The nursery will undertake to build up trusting relationships between staff and families at The Ark
- Where abuse at home is suspected, the nursery will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations are being made
- Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with parents where appropriate
- A copy of this policy is included in the parent's "welcome pack" that they receive prior to their child starting at The Ark

In the event that a staff member suspects that a child is subject to abuse we will follow the procedure for safeguarding children.

At this point we shall make a decision as to whether or not informing the MAST team. The Multi-Agency Screening Service (MASS) team of child protection professionals including: Police, Children's Social Care and Health. MASS is a triage service for all safeguarding concerns and will give advice on the correct procedures for individual cases



Staff Allegations

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the procedure set out in our Safeguarding Young Children and Child Protection Procedure. 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 otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

Contact telephone numbers

Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board	0300 303 0350
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	01706 922856
Local Authority Designated Officer	Louise Hurst - 01706 927617
MASS	0300 3030440
Rochdale Children's Social Care	0300 3030440
CSC Out of hours emergencies	0300 303 8875
Police Safeguarding Unit	0161 856 6411
Early Help	01706 925127