SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CO-ORDINATOR – Kylie Scott

Designated Safe Guarding Children's Officer – Kylie Scott St Bernard's Preschool Leader
Deputy Designated Safe Guarding Children's Officer – Donna Mulhern Preschool Manager

The safety of the children attending St Bernard's Pre-School Education Centre is of paramount importance. This statement is issued in addition to the pre-school policy covering SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN.

The following procedures are in place to safeguard children from abuse or neglect whilst children are in our care:

- All staff and regular helpers are vetted according to Access NI regulations.
- There is a minimum ratio of 1:8 adults to children.
- Children are not left alone with staff or helpers.
- Children are supervised at all times by at least two adults – one of whom must be a qualified member of staff.
- If children need assistance with toileting the toilet doors are left open and staff makes the person in charge aware of what is happening.
- Children must be encouraged to be independent and their bottoms must only be wiped in extreme circumstances. Where a child is in difficulty another member of staff must be alerted and the parent should be advised of our actions.
- If children need a change of clothing, particularly underclothes, this is performed in the disabled toilet with the door ajar, whilst maintaining children's privacy and limiting any embarrassment.
- In line with Minimum Standards, if we are outside the setting e.g. in the Parish Hall, out in the garden/playground, and a child requires the toilet/has a toileting accident or has an accident that requires returning to the Pre School, a staff member will be accompanied by another child to ensure that a staff member is never alone with a child.
- Adults are discouraged from showing favouritism and spending too long with one child.
- Adults respect children's privacy and personal space. They should not touch or pick up a child who does not wish adult contact.
- Adults should not ask children to keep secrets.
- When managing children's challenging behaviour, Adults should never handle a child roughly.
- Adults should not shout at children aggressively or use sarcasm.
- Any contact made by staff with the children and their families outside the preschool hours must be approved by the pre-school leader.
- A record will be kept of any accidents or injuries sustained at the group.
- Any injuries noticed by staff when the children arrive or during the course of the session, which have not occurred at the group, will be recorded and discussed with the child's parent/carer if appropriate

- Any change in children's behaviour will be recorded and discussed with the child's parent/carer.
- If adults suspect that any child may be suffering from abuse or neglect, the pre-school leader must be informed and all concerns will be reported to the Designated Safe Guarding Children's Officer.
- If any child comes into the pre-school with a bump, cut etc it will be recorded in the 'witness marks' book
- All active mobile phones and cameras coming into pre-school need to be put into office. This includes all visitors and volunteers to the setting. Permission will be sought from parents on the registration form for staff to take videos and photographs to use within the setting and to use in children's learning journals, advertising and also on the pre-school website.

COVID-19 UPDATE 14th September 2021

Children's Health & Wellbeing

Risk assessments may be devised in relation to new or amended activities as a result of COVID-19 to ensure continued welfare.

There may be changes in a child's home environment as a result of COVID-19 and 'lockdown', and families may have had to change usual routines such as working from home and lack of child minding which can result in stress. Some children may be witnessing increased behaviours at home in relation to alcohol use, domestic violence etc. The Pre School will identify vulnerable children and their families and will work to support families in such cases. If we have a concern relating to a child's welfare this may need to be reported in line with our usual Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

As children have experienced long periods of staying at home, less opportunities for social interactions and possible regression in development due to restricted social and play experiences, staff will be actively more vigilant for signs that children require additional support (including emotional support) at the beginning of the Pre School year. Staff will be taking increased observations of children and weekly planning will be amended to reflect this. Staff will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding settling in/transitioning concerns, and parents/carers will be regularly informed.

In the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect the pre-school will act as follows:

All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

- The allegation will be reported to the Designated Safe Guarding Children's Officer or directly to Gateway. (see Safe Guarding Children Procedure Flow Chart)
- The Designated Safe Guarding Children's Officer will also be notified if the allegation is against a member of staff.
- A record of the allegation will be made, together with statements from adults.

- Staff may seek legal advice, either independently or through a professional association.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation, staff or helpers may be suspended until the matter is resolved.
- The pre-school will liaise with and follow the advice of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Gateway.

22a VETTING and BARRING

The Coalition Government has confirmed that until all the appropriate legislation has been introduced and the new arrangements are established, the existing responsibilities of employers will remain. These include:

- A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups.

- An organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law.

- If your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults and you dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or you would have done so if they had not left, you must tell the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Safe Guarding Children Procedure Flow Chart

On discovery or suspicion of child abuse or neglect

Inform your Designated Person for Safe Guarding Children

Kylie Scott (Pre School leader)

028 90 790702

If the Designated Person is not available contact Deputy Designated Person

Donna Mulhern (Pre School Manager)

028 90 790702

Who should then take the following steps:

Where it is clear that a Child Protection Referral is needed contact (without delay)

The Gateway Team
028 90 507 000

The Regional Emergency Social Work Service (out of hours)
028 950 499 99

Where the Designated Person for Safe Guarding Children is not sure

whether it is a Child Safe Guarding Issue

They may seek advice from **The Gateway Team**

Phone the **Early Years Team** to inform them on **028 95 042811**

Our Key Social Worker is Nuala Lavery

Remember always make and keep a written factual record of all events and action taken, date and sign each entry on this record.

KEEP RECORDS CONFIDENTIAL AND SECURE
IF IN DOUBT ACT NOW!!!!!!