**Cygnet Nursery **

**Safeguarding Children 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 2015’)*

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. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

Our nursery will 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 and to be safe from abuse in whatever form.

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 and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
* 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
* Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities
* Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
* Always listen to children
* Provide and 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

Cygnet Nursery 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 nursery manager or to David Smith the nursery Owner at the earliest opportunity.

The legal framework and definition of safeguarding:

* Children Act 1989 and 2004
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017
* Working together to safeguard children 2015
* Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The nursery 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 will 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.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

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. 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 in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The nursery aims to:

* Keep the child at the centre of all we do
* Ensure the staff are trained to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, 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 other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
* Ensure staff understand how to identify early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
* Ensure that 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 procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures
* Make any child protection referrals in a timely way sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
* Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate
* 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 nursery 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 nursery premises including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
* Ensure that parents are aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery 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 procedures issued by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

**Contact telephone numbers**

* **Ofsted (Tel: 0300 123 1231)**
* **Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (OSCB) (Tel: 01865 815843)**
* **MASH (*Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)* (Tel: 0845 050 7666)**
* **Local Authority Children and Families Assessment Team (North Team) (Tel: 01865 816670)**
* **Emergency Duty Team (after 5pm and weekends): 0800 833408**
* **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Tel: 01865 815232)**

**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.

*What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2006*

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 in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g fleshy part 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.

**Female genital mutilation**

This type of physical abuse is practiced 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 any other siblings involved. For those nurseries caring for older children in their out of school facility this may be an area of abuse you could come across. Symptom 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 physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact children’s social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

**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.

Procedure:

* All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
* The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity
* Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
* If there appear to be any queries regarding the injury, the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) in the local authority will be notified.

**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 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 symptoms may also 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 ‘recording abuse suspicions’ will be followed.

Procedure:

* The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
* The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
* The observed instances will be reported to the nursery manager
* The matter will be referred to LSCB in the local authority.

**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.

Procedure:

* The concern should be discussed with the manager/room leader/ registered person
* The concern will be discussed with the parent
* Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
* A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may need to be completed
* If there appear to be queries regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to LSCB in the local authority.

**Neglect**

Action should be taken 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 that 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.

**Procedure:**

* The concern will be discussed with the parent
* Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
* An assessment form may need to be completed
* If there appear to be queries regarding the circumstances the LSCB in the local authority will be notified.

**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
* Significant changes to behaviour patterns

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the nursery manager or Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator (DSCO) of any observation or disclosure and include:

* Child’s name
* Child’s address
* Age of the child and date of birth
* Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
* Exact words spoken by the child
* Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
* Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
* Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
* Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager/DSCO, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important NOT to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child’s mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the LSCB and Ofsted and/or a CAF needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LSCB and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent’s or staff’s supposed or actual behaviour.

**Staffing and volunteering**

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by the nursery 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 nursery regardless of whether or not they have a DBS clearance.

All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment, and receive initial basic training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery that co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The nursery DSCO undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

**The Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinators (DSCO) at the nursery is: Tracy Walker and Stacey Fennell**

* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
* Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children.
* This information is also stated within every member of staff’s contract.
* We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children.
* We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us.
* All students will have enhanced DBS clearance conducted on them before their placement starts.
* Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised.
* Any staff, volunteers or students at Cygnet without two references or enhanced DBS disclosure will be placed on our risk assessment register until such time that we have received them or that they leave Cygnet.
* 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 lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
* We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* All visitors/contractors will be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use. Wherever possible works will be carried out outside of normal nursery hours.
* All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support
* The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

**Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where guidance of the LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. 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 under the guidance of the LSCB.

**Support to families**

* The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery.
* The nursery 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-judgemental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest 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 under the guidance of the LSCB 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 nursery or any other person living or working on the nursery premises**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will follow the HM Government guidance in ‘*Working together to safeguard children’.*

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to the Owner/Registered Person/Deputy Manager instead.

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

* LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance.
* A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled.
* The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, LSCB and asks all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required.
* If the allegation could possibly interfere with the normal working of the nursery, the member of staff or volunteer will be allocated to another area, after due consultation with all parties and professionals, including the LADO.
* Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice.
* The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation
* All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
* Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
* Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery is also required to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure their records are updated.
* All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for reference and future CRB checks and avoid any unnecessary re-investigation
* The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry.
* Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

**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 (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

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 setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care**.**

**e-Safety**

Our nursery is aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However it is also aware of the dangers and strives to support children, staff and families in using the internet safely.

Within the nursery we do this by:

* Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
* Having in place a mobile phone and devices policy
* Using approved devices to record/photograph in the setting
* Ensuring children are supervised using internet devices
* Integrating e-safety into nursery daily practice by discussing computer usage ‘rules’ deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do online

**Our nursery 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 nursery manager or owner at the earliest opportunity.**

*(Policies & Procedures)Reviewed & Updated: February 2021. BY: TW*

*Next Review Due: February 2022*