**Child Protection Policy/Safeguarding Children**

**Statement of intent**

Our Playgroup wants to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

**Aims**

Our aims are to:

* promote children's rights to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our Playgroup that 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;
* promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
* promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
* work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Our safeguarding policy is based on three key commitments.

1. Greendown Playgroup is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.
2. Greendown Playgroup is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).
3. Greendown Playgroup is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programme for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

**Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments.

**Key commitment 1**

**Staff and volunteers**

* Our designated person who co-ordinates child protection issues is

Julie Steward (Manager) 01793 882234

* Our designated officer who oversees this work is the Chairperson 01793 882234.
* We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* Applicants for posts within the Playgroup are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' check with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) 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 abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the Playgroup or has access to the children.
* Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 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 Playgroup.
* We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the Playgroup so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

**Key commitment 2**

**Responding to suspicions of abuse**

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
* Staff acknowledge that children are vulnerable to radicalisation, or already being radicalised. (The Prevent Duty )
* Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the Playgroup Manager (designated person). The information is stored on the child's personal file.
* Staff will build children’s resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values & enabling them to challenge extremist views.
* We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
* NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board/Prevent Board.
* We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff:

* listens to the child offers reassurance that she or he will take action;
* does not question the child;
* makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
* the date and time of the observation or disclosure;
* the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
* the 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.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting.

**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 the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

**Liaison with other agencies**

* We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
* We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the well-being of children.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the Playgroup and social services to work well together.
* Contact details for the local NSPCC are also kept.
* Contact details for the local Prevent Lead are also kept.
* If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

**Allegations against staff**

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the playgroup. Or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the playgroup, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* We follow the guidance of the LADO & Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the Playgroup, or anyone living or working in the premises occupied by the Playgroup, has abused a child.
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the Playgroup, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the Playgroup, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
* Where the management committee and children's social care agree it I appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

## Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the Playgroup because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the D.B.S so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

**Key commitment 3**

## Training

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the Playgroup to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

## Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left open.

## Curriculum

* We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* We create within the Playgroup a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
* We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

**Confidentiality**

* All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LADO & Local Safeguarding Children Board.

**Support to Families**

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
* We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the Playgroup's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Legal framework

Primary Legislation

* Children Act (2006)
* Protection of Children Act (1999)
* Data Protection Act (1998)
* The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
* Terrorism & Security Act 2015

Secondary Legislation

* Sexual Offences Act (2003)
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
* Human Rights Act (1999)
* Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
* Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations
* Equalities Act (2006)
* Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Greendown Playgroup

Held on

Signed on behalf of the Playgroup