



Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

Friends at Play is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation.

The Club will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. The Club's child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) available at all times while the Club is in session. The DSL coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (e.g. Social Care, BSCP and Ofsted).

The Club's designated DSL is Florence Potts, Manger/owner. The Deputy DSL is Angie McGinnis, Manager.

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, eg in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation (FGM) and/or
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not question them

- give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the matter straightaway using the **Record of concern** form. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the Club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Peer-on-peer abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (eg much older)
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (eg in terms of disability, special needs, confidence, physical strength)
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

Extremism and radicalisation

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, eg:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

Signs of radicalisation

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Record of concern** form and refer the matter to the DSL.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined as: “all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons” (WHO, 1996).

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 the UK, including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved.

FGM is classified under four major types:

Type 1 - Clitoridectomy:

“Partial or total removal of the clitoris (a small, sensitive and erectile part of the female genitals) and, in very rare cases, only the prepuce (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoris).”

Type 2 - Excision:

“Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (the labia are “the lips” that surround the vagina).”

Type 3 - Infibulation:

“Narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the inner, or outer, labia, with or without removal of the clitoris.”

Type 4 - Other:
“All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterizing the genital area.”

(Quoted from:

http://www.wscb.org.uk/wscb/info/88/local_multi-agency_strategies/99/local_multi-agency_strategies/6)

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- Bleeding
- Painful areas
- Acute urinary retention and/or Urinary infections
- wound infection
- Septicaemia
- Incontinence
- Vaginal and pelvic infections
- Depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns

It is a part of our role as professionals working with children to have an understanding of FGM. All staff will undergo training to gain knowledge of what FGM is and how to look for signs of this being carried out on a child, as well as knowing what children are at high risk of this happening.

Logging a concern

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Record of concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name and date of birth of the child involved
- a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child’s own words
- name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Club’s DSL who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

For concerns about **child abuse**, the DSL will contact First Response. The DSL will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours. If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly.

For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation**, the DSL will contact the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP). For more serious concerns which should be reported as a crime, the DSL will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns where a child is in immediate danger, the DSL will contact the Police on 999.

Allegations against staff

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.

- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate the Club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Promoting awareness among staff

The Club promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. The Club ensures that:

- the designated DSL has relevant experience and receives appropriate training in safeguarding and Prevent Duty, and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it
- all staff receive Safeguarding Children and the DSL will receive designated person training and this is refreshed every two years
- safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff
- all staff receive a copy of this **Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy**, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation
- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation
- all staff receive basic safeguarding training, and safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all staff meetings
- all staff receive basic training in Prevent Duty
- staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which is kept in our safeguarding folder located in the dining hall cupboard.
- the Club's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' and staff are familiar with 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)'.

Use of mobile phones and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission. Only the club camera will be used to take photographs of children at the Club, except with the express permission of the manager. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones to take photographs at the Club.

Contact numbers

fgmfhelp.nspcc.org.uk

FGM helpline: 0800 028 35500

First response: 01296 383962 (Mon to Thurs 9am to 5.30pm / Fri 9am to 5.00pm)

Out of hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT): 0800 999 7677

Police (if a child is in immediate danger): 999

Police (to report a crime): 101

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789321

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): 01296 382070

BSCB (Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board): www.bucks.lscb.org.uk

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

Florence Potts, Manager/Owner or Angie McGinnis, Manager

Legal framework:

Primary legislation

- The Children Act 1989 (updated 2004)
- The Education Act 2002
- The Childcare Act 2006
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF 1989

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2015
- Equalities Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Further guidance:

- Ofsted
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2023
- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families DoH 2000
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners 2010
- The Children Act 1989 (updated 2014): Children in need (section 17), Protection of a child at risk of significant harm (section 47)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers 2015
- ChildLine
- NSPCC
- Independent Safeguarding Authority: www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

This policy was adopted by:	Date:
To be reviewed:	Signed: