**Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection**

**Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to safeguard children.**

**Our organisation’s appointed person (s) to be responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse are:**

**Ladybirds Parkside Preschool:**

**Jade Parker– Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DSLO)**

**Zoe Marler-Hausen – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer**

**Ladybirds Porchester Road Preschool:**

**Zoe Marler-Hausen – Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DSLO)**

**Theresa Quartermaine – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Statement of Intent:

We believe that the health and safety of all our children and staff is of paramount importance and will take the necessary steps to ensure that procedures are in place to protect all our children and staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy, Ladybirds Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and General Data Protection Regulation and Confidentiality Policy.

Confidentiality must be adhered to by all staff and Management throughout the entire process.

Procedures should an allegation be made against a member of staff:

We have adopted the Working Together to Safeguard Children Government guidance procedures and the Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB) child protection procedure, which aim to ensure that all agencies working with children adopt processes and achieve outcomes which are consistent in terms of natural justice for staff against whom allegations are made and for the child concerned.

Reporting Concerns

Any allegation of abuse must be reported to the setting’s Manager and DSLO or in their absence, a Deputy Manager/DLSO.

If the Manager is implicated in the allegation, the concern must be reported to a Deputy Manager/DSLO and a Director.

In either case a record of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

Any member of staff who believes that allegations or concerns, which have been reported to the appropriate manager, are not being investigated properly has a responsibility to report it to a higher level (Directors) or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

In the first instance the staff member/s implicated will be removed from ratio within the setting, the (LADO) will be contacted for advice. Under this guidance the (LADO) must be notified of all allegations within 24 hours of a complaint being received where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or children
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or children
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated that she/he is unsuitable to work with children

This process does not replace our Safeguarding Children Policy nor the Ladybirds Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and will be used in conjunction with them.

Management of an allegation of abuse may involve one or all of the following:

* A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
* Enquiries and assessment by children’s social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
* Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

Any allegation that an employee/volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly.

Suspension should not be automatic, but must be considered (normally at the first strategy discussion) if:

* There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or
* The allegation warrants investigation by the Police; or
* The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

If an urgent consideration of the option of suspension is required prior to that discussion, the LADO should canvass the views of police and children’s social care on suspension and inform the employer.

A decision to suspend or temporarily re-deploy staff rests exclusively with the employer (The manager and Directors) who should consider:

* The safety of the children;
* Any impact on the enquiry;
* If suspended the staff member must under no circumstances make contact with the any of the staff team or the family of the child concerned with the allegation.
* If a suspended person is to return to work, appropriate help/ support should be given e.g. a phased return and/or provision of a mentor and plan of how to manage contact with any child/children who made the allegation.

The child’s interests are paramount and their views and wishes must be given careful consideration at all times.

Important aspects to consider throughout this process

* Supporting those involved: children/parents involved, who must be informed throughout the investigation and be informed of the outcome of the disciplinary. Also supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation
* Maintaining confidentiality
* Accurate and detailed record keeping
* The setting to look at the learning lessons from the allegation and revisit their policies and procedure to see how and why an allegation happened and put in new or more measures of safeguarding.

Further Guidance

LADO

NSPCC factsheet “Managing allegations of abuse”

Working Together to Safeguard Children document

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