

## Needingworth Community Preschool

### 1.4 Domestic Abuse

#### Policy statement

Needingworth Community Pre-school fully recognises the responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Our policy applies to all staff, paid and unpaid, working in the setting, including volunteers, all of whom have a vital role in safeguarding children.

This policy sets out how the setting complies with statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who attend the setting. The policy will be reviewed regularly, annually as a minimum.

#### **Domestic Abuse**

*The government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:*

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological, such as intimidation, threats, blackmail, threat of suicide.
- Physical, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, grabbing, reckless driving.
- Sexual, such as rape, sexually derogatory names, unwanted sexual photos.
- Financial, such as withholding money, preventing employment, stealing from the victim.
- Emotional, such as constant criticism, name calling, isolating victim from friends and family.
- Coercive control is a deprivation of freedom in personal, social, economic and political life. It includes humiliation and intimidation used to harm, punish or frighten.

#### **Types of Domestic Abuse**

- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Family-Related Violence (FRV)
- Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA)
- Elder Abuse
- Situational Couple Violence (SCV)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage (FM)
- Honour-Based Violence (HBV)

## Protecting children

Where there is domestic abuse between adults there is often child abuse. All children and young people witnessing violence are being emotionally abused. Some may get caught up in the violence or be a direct target themselves. Those who have experienced domestic violence will feel many different emotions and each will deal with it differently. Adults often think that children and young people aren't really affected by domestic abuse if they don't see physical violence. This is not true. Children may hear a violent incident from the next room (which can be worse than witnessing it). They might see injuries later, be affected by a parent's unpredictable or controlling behaviour, or be neglected as a result of the abuse. How much a child is affected by living with domestic abuse depends on many factors. This includes their age, the nature of the abuse, what they are aware of, whether they have a 'safe significant adult' who can emotionally protect them, and their own temperament or personality. The long-term effects on children who have experienced domestic abuse are profound, and can include depression, guilt, self-harm and suicide; misuse of alcohol or drugs; post-traumatic stress disorder and an inability to trust people.

### The Designated Persons for Child Protection in our setting are:

**Dawn Gibson**

**Angela Maxwell**

### Our Designated Officer (a member of the management Committee) who oversees this work is:

**Abi Woodcock**

## Procedures

Pre-school is working in partnership with the Police and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to identify and provide appropriate support to children who have experienced domestic abuse; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

In order to achieve this, CCC's Education Safeguarding Team will share police information of all domestic abuse incidents, where one of the children attending our setting was present, with one of our Designated Person's for Child Protection (DP). On receipt of any information, the DP will consider the appropriate support for the child and action required.

### What action should the setting take?

The Designated Person should record the discussion on a Log of Concern form, chronology and keep it in the child's child protection file. If there is not already a child protection file, a new one should be started. All child protection files should be stored in a locked cabinet accessible only to the Designated Person/s. Every case of domestic abuse is different, therefore, the Designated Person should consider

- the risks to the child/ren
- any risks to the adult victim(s)

- any possible risks to the child/other children and staff in the setting, should the alleged perpetrator come to the setting
- ways to support and communicate safely with the child, without making them feel more concerned about what is happening to them
- which staff in the setting need information, and how much, bearing in mind the 'need to know' basis, relevance and proportionality
- which other agencies are involved
- whether the setting has supporting information which should be shared with other agencies in order to safeguard the child and family
- who has parental responsibility (PR) for the child (see Designated Person booklet)
- where the child is living, who is having contact with them and if any court order regarding child contact is in place obtain a copy for the setting's record
- clarify safe contact details including times and alternative numbers

## Child Disclosure

In response to any disclosure about DA/DV, (Domestic Abuse/Domestic Violence) staff should follow the principles of good practice in dealing with any disclosure for child protection.

Staff need to:

- take the time to listen carefully
- take the disclosure seriously, but remain calm
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- avoid making any promises which they cannot keep
- ensure that the child is clear that the information they have supplied may have to be shared with other professionals in order to keep the child safe
- avoid using leading questions or making any judgmental comments about the alleged abuser/perpetrator
- avoid any physical examination of alleged injuries
- remember that they should maintain confidentiality and only share the information with the Designated Person within the setting
- record the disclosure in detail, using the '**Log of Concern**' form
- include in this Log the full name of the child, their date of birth, and the date and time of the disclosure
- record the child's own words where possible and avoid putting their own opinion or interpretations into the record.
- ensure that they have signed and fully completed the Log, record any inconsistent or unusual events linked with the disclosure, e.g. pre-existing injury records, or a parent giving an explanation of an injury which differs from that given by the child in their disclosure
- reassure the child about what is going to happen next, i.e. that they will have to share the information with the DP.
- avoid making any promises about what may happen in the long-term as a result of the disclosure
- pass on the written Log immediately to the DP, so that they may take appropriate action.

When the DP receives the information, they should consider a referral to Social Care or contact the MASH for advice via 0345 045 1362.

If the case is already open to Children's Social Care, information should be supplied to the relevant Unit. Settings will be guided by the MASH if this is the case.

Some children may retract their comments at a later time. This may be for a variety of reasons:

- Fear of repercussions from the perpetrator
- Fear that they will have implicated the adult victim in a difficult situation
- Fear of being taken into care
- A sense of disloyalty
- A sense of 'the devil you know' regarding the status quo being better than alternatives
- Response to threats
- Minimisation of the impact upon them.

In the event of the child retracting, it is important not to imply that they have 'wasted time', and to reassure them that there is still a route to support. Records of all conversations should be made, and information updated.

### **Parent's/Carer's disclosure**

In the event of a Parent/Carer making a disclosure staff should:

- listen carefully to the information given
- avoid making any judgments or expression of opinion
- reassure the parent/carers that they have done the right thing in disclosing
- avoid making any promises to the parent/carers that the information will remain 'secret', emphasising where necessary that the welfare of their child/ren is paramount
- record the information immediately on the **Logging a Concern form**, using the same guidelines as when recording a disclosure from a child
- pass this Log on to the DP immediately
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained, and that information is only shared with the DP

The DP may need to seek advice from Social Care via 0345 045 1362. However, DPs should also be aware that they should contact the police if the disclosure is suggestive of immediate risk of harm.

Be aware that the perpetrator may often present themselves as the victim to agencies and settings to manipulate situations and gain support and/or sympathy. It is crucial to ensure that the parent/carers is very clear about:

- your individual duty of care towards their child
- the fact that you may have to take advice from other agencies in order to keep their child safer
- the need for you to signpost other services which may be able to offer skilled and relevant support, such as the services of an IDVA/ISVA; counselling; legal advice from a solicitor.

**In the event of a member of staff being identified as a perpetrator, the DP should contact Gemma Hope, Early Years Safeguarding Manager 01223 714760 or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01223 727967 for advice.**

## Parental Responsibility (PR)

All settings should ensure that information they hold is updated regularly, and that the name of anybody with PR for a child is recorded. A perpetrator may have PR, but if they pose a risk to a child, the setting has a duty of care to protect the child. If the victim parent has not already done so, they should take legal advice and obtain an order, e.g. a Restraining Order, Non-Molestation Order, Non-Contact Order, which will clarify the position of the setting. Settings should ask to have sight of such orders in order to clarify their Risk Assessments. PR cannot be removed, as such, but having PR does not automatically entitle a parent to collect a child. If there has not been a prior arrangement made by the main carer, or if to release the child would pose any possible risk, the setting should behave in a protective manner. Should the alleged/convicted perpetrator arrive to collect the child, staff should say that they need to check this arrangement with the parent who brought the child into the setting. If this results in aggression, the setting should ring 999.

## Sharing Information

The sharing of information relating to DA/DV follows the same principle as general safeguarding information.

- sharing of information should be proportionate and relevant
- information sharing may be justified in the best interests of the child, or in the public interest
- information sharing between DPs in different settings, for example where there are siblings in a family experiencing DA/DV, or where a child has transferred to another setting and the CP file has not yet reached the receiving institution, is justified in the best interests of the child
- all records of conversations should be kept as described above
- sharing information with other agencies e.g. social care; police, is part of a statutory
- The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the 'Cambridgeshire and Peterborough *Joint Agency Protocol for Domestic Abuse – Notifications to Schools, Colleges and Early Years settings.*

<b>This policy was adopted at a meeting of</b>	Needingworth Community Pre-School AGM
<b>Held on</b>	October 2023 (date)
<b>Date to be reviewed</b>	September 2024 (date)
<b>Signed on behalf of the provider</b>	
<b>Name of signatory</b>	Abi Woodcock
<b>Role of signatory</b>	Committee Chair

### References:

*Domestic Abuse for Early Years Setting - September 2015*

*Domestic Abuse Guidance for Early Years and Childcare Settings – Summer 2018*

*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding and Partnership Board*

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

*NSPCC*

*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board Procedures – November 2018*