



## Child Protection/Safeguarding and Staff Behaviour Policies

In our pre-school, we intend to create an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

**Footprints are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff to share this commitment. Parents are informed prior to their child starting here of our duty to follow child protection procedures.**

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

The safety and welfare of all our children at Footprints pre-school is our highest priority. We aim to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment so that every child can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every child can develop their full potential and feel positive about themselves as individuals. In all matters relating to child protection, the setting will follow the procedures laid down by the ministry. This policy is applicable to the whole pre-school.

All members of staff have a duty to safeguard our children's welfare and must therefore familiarise themselves, and comply, at all times with these policies. All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents can happen at any time and anywhere and are required to be alert to any possible concerns. Further, they should understand that safeguarding issues are rarely a stand-alone event; multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION?

Safeguarding is a term, which is broader than 'child protection'. Child Protection refers to the procedures we use for children at risk of significant harm or those who have been harmed. Safeguarding relates to what we do for all children in order to promote their welfare, protect them from harm and address their needs.

**Training is given to all staff involved in the pre-school to enable them to recognise the signs of abuse and what to do if concerns arise about possible abuse/neglect.**

Staff should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for looked after children, children who are disabled, have special educational needs, show signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour, or are in a family presenting challenges such as adult mental health issues or substance abuse.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances

Pre-School staff must always act in the best interests of the children in their care and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them. Safeguards in place within the pre-school protect and promote the welfare of children. These safeguards include our Child

Protection and Staff Behaviour Policy and procedures for dealing with issues of concern or abuse, filtering and monitoring of the internet, liaison with other agencies and professionals and regular training.

If a child arrives at pre-school with a noticeable bruise or injury the parent/carer is asked to sign an 'existing injury form' and any necessary enquiries are made, making any referrals if appropriate.

If a child does not regularly attend pre-school due to illness we would make enquires via parent/carer, monitoring the situation and make any referrals if appropriate.

Children are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings and acceptable ways to express them. This enables children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

Footprints is alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Staff share any concerns about any changes observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance. If required a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual on-going records of children's progress and development. The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child; timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child; the date, name and signature of the recorder. All staff have received relevant Child Protection training, updated as necessary.

The responsibility rests with the individual and action is taken as soon as possible on the day that any concern is identified. Accurate records of all actions are kept and are signed and dated.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

Footprints prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting our pre-school. A copy of this policy and other policies relating to issues of safeguarding, are on our website or from the office as a paper copy. We hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the pre-school. Allegations of child abuse or concerns about the welfare of any child will be dealt with consistently in accordance with this policy. Open communication is essential.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**

Footprints pre-school follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children and acts at all times in compliance with the ministry regulations.

All applicants for work within the pre-school are interviewed before an appointment is made and are asked to provide names of at least two referees. All such references are followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations are sought. All staff have received an enhanced police check prior to working with the children.

All appointments are subject to a probationary period and are not confirmed unless the pre-school is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

In addition to carrying out safe recruitment procedures as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the Pre- School, including part time staff and visiting staff are subject to the necessary statutory child protection checks before starting work.

Our policies are reviewed by the management team annually. Please refer to the Recruitment and Selection Procedures for further details.

## **TRAINING AND REVIEWING**

Regular training of staff refreshes their awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues and attention is drawn to new legislation pertaining to these areas when the need arises. Within the bounds of confidentiality, and with due regard to discretion, staff are alerted to specific, individual concerns about child protection or safeguarding.

The role of Footprints management for Child Protection can be briefly summarised as follows:

- To formulate pre-school policy in accordance with government policy and procedures – reviewing and updating annually.
- To ensure all staff are aware of policy and procedures.
- To instruct staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimand and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at Footprints).
- To attend training as required.
- To organise training for staff including induction for new staff.
- To receive suspicions of abuse and determine an appropriate response in accordance with agreed policy.
- To forward suspicions or allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities
- To implement relevant aspects of Child Protection Plans and liaise with the Key Person.
- To ensure effective channels for communication are in place within the pre-school and with local authorities
- To monitor children about whom the pre-school may have concerns, to ensure the appropriate provision for their needs is made.
- To develop the personal safety aspects of the pre-school curriculum.
- To ensure that support mechanisms are in place for staff distressed by/involved in cases of abuse.
- To ensure that all internal recording systems are consistent and meet ministry requirements.
- To have and share clear guidelines on acceptable staff behaviour towards children at pre-school.
- To have systems and procedures in place to protect staff from malicious allegations.
- To know the procedures for allegations against staff.

## **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

Every new member of staff, including part-time staff received appropriate induction training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse, bullying and radicalisation and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the local authorities. Everyone attends a refresher training every three years in line with the EYFS and all staff are alerted

to updated legislation. Training in safeguarding is an important part of the induction process. Training includes a review of the pre-school's policies.

Students are supervised by qualified staff at all times.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

### **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD**

The pre-school treats the safeguarding of children in our care as the highest priority and recognises the important role it has to play in the recognition and referral of children who may be at risk or in need.

All our pre-school staff are made aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the pre-school's care.

Every member of staff, including part-time are required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse to the management.

All such concerns are kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved are the member of staff/Key Person, the pre-school Manager, and the Managing Director.

The Manager and Managing Director are responsible for contacting the local authorities in the event of cause for concern regarding a child.

All members of staff are aware of the Pre-School's confidentiality policy.

The pre-school takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff in the group.

Where abuse at home is suspected, the pre-school continues to welcome the child and family while local authority investigations proceed.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the pre-school does all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

### **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALL DISCLOSURES/ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Allegations of abuse may be made against a member of staff, another child, parent or other person connected with the pre-school.

If a member of staff is made aware of any allegation of abuse, or if knowledge of possible abuse comes to his/her attention, it is his/her duty to listen to the child, to provide reassurance and to record the child's statements, but not to probe or put words into the child's mouth.

The member of staff should talk to the Manager and Managing Director and record an accurate account so that appropriate agencies can be informed. The Manager will contact the legal authorities for advice or direction. We will inform the authorities within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

Should the allegation of abuse concern one of the management, the pre-school Managing Director should inform legal authorities.

If the allegation concerns a member of staff or another child they would normally be informed as soon as possible after the result of any initial investigation. However, advice will always be sought from the legal authorities before this happens.

If the legal authorities or any of the statutory child protection authorities decide to take the case further, any staff member concerned may be suspended if this is felt appropriate. The reasons and justification for suspension will be recorded and the staff member informed of them. In the case of staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the pre-schools Disciplinary Procedure.

During the course of the investigation the pre-school, in consultation with the legal authorities, will decide what information should be given to parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

At the end of such an investigation, no matter what the outcome, Footprints will conduct an internal workings audit to look at any possibilities for change in practice and opportunities for more training, which could assist in the process of preventing similar events from reoccurring.

## **STAFF BEHAVIOUR AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. They need to treat all children with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child. Where this is not possible, it is good practice to ensure that others are nearby. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint.

### **Communication with Children/Parents**

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses to children or parents, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal email. If they need to speak to a child/parent by telephone, they should use one of the pre-school's telephones and email using the pre-school system. The group leader on all trips should take the pre-school mobile phone with them. The pre-school mobile should be used for any contact with parents that may be necessary.

### **Physical Contact with Children**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times. Staff should not have unnecessary physical contact with children and should be alert to the fact that minor forms of friendly physical contact can be misconstrued by children or onlookers.

A member of staff can never take the place of a parent in providing physical comfort and should be cautious of any demonstration of affection.

Physical contact should never be secretive or of the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible, the management informed and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

### **Physical Restraint**

(please see Physical Handling of Children Policy)

### **Confidentiality**

Staff members should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to children or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should guarantee only that they will pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort out the problem and that they will not tell anyone who does not have a clear need to know. They will also take whatever steps they can to protect the informing child or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure has been made.

## **DAILY CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF**

### **Attendance and Timekeeping**

Should a staff member need to be absent or expect to be late for any reason, of a routine matter he/she should, in the first instance, ask the Manager, in advance when possible. If this is not possible, he/she is asked to contact the Manager at the earliest opportunity. In the case of absences that are not considered routine, all staff should consult the Manager.

### **Smoking & Vaping**

To promote a healthy and pleasant working environment and because of the fire risk, smoking is not allowed (a) anywhere on the pre-school premises, (b) whilst directly supervising children when off-site and (c) within sight of children, whether at the pre-school premises or elsewhere. (Please see No Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs Policy)

### **Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not permitted on our premises or whilst supervising children off-site. Employees' conduct and performance must not be adversely impacted by alcohol or drugs when undertaking their duties at any time. (Please see No Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs Policy)

### **Security**

Staff should be vigilant at all times. Visitors are required to follow procedures which include signing in, wearing a visitor's badge and being supervised at all times. (Please see Safety & Security Policy & Procedure)

### **Personal Appearance**

The pre-school receives visits regularly from parents, prospective parents and others and naturally wishes to convey an impression of efficiency and organisation. Therefore, whilst not

wishing to impose unreasonable obligation of staff they are, nonetheless, required to dress appropriately for their working environment.

### **ACTION IF A CHILD IS MISSING**

(please see Procedure in the Event of Being Unable to Find a Child)

### **ACTION IF A CHILD IS ABSENT WITHOUT EXPLANATION**

- Pre-School to telephone parent/carer at end of session on first day of absence.
- If no reply after 24 hours, try to establish contact with any of the other named contacts on registration form.
- If no replies within 48 hours, Manager or Deputy to visit home, accompanied by another staff member.
- The Local Authority will be informed of any child who is absent for a continuous period of a maximum of 5 days school days without adequate explanation. It is understood that a child going missing from pre-school is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

### **BULLYING**

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our children and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the pre-school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable and the pre-school keeps a record of any incidents. (Please see our Behaviour Management Policy for further details).

### **CYBERBULLYING**

Footprints make it clear that cyberbullying of staff whether by parent/carers, or those linked to parent/carers, e.g. other family members is unacceptable. The pre-school also make it clear that it is not acceptable for parent/carers, those linked to parent/carers or colleagues to disparage and bully staff via social media in the same way that it is unacceptable to do so face-to-face. Footprints encourage all staff, parent/carers and those linked to parent/carers to use social media responsibly.

### **PEER ON PEER ABUSE**

This is most likely to manifest itself in bullying. Safeguarding concerns of this sort should be dealt with in the same way as other forms of abuse: one of the management should be alerted promptly and a written record made of the concern.

### **COMPLAINTS**

(Please see Complaints Procedure)

Copies of the pre-school's complaints procedure can be accessed online.

### **EQUAL TREATMENT**

We are committed to equal treatment for children regardless of sex, gender, race, disability, religion or belief. We keep a record of any incidents that breach this code of conduct.

Discriminatory and derogatory language is not tolerated.

We aim to create a friendly, caring and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each child.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We recognise that there can be barriers to identifying abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers.

## **TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO KEEP SAFE**

Circle times and visitors in the pre-school are used to teach children how to protect themselves, reduce risk and build resilience.

## **EMPTY POCKET POLICY**

Footprints pre-school operates an empty pocket policy in order to ensure the welfare and safety of all children. We prohibit the use of personal mobile phones, electronic recording Media or devices and cameras in our pre-school setting when working with children or when on outings.

(Please see Empty Pocket Policy)

## **IMAGES (CAPTURING)**

Photographs should only be taken of children with their parents' permission (provided in writing via consent form).

Photographs should only be taken by staff members. Where photographs are taken by staff to give evidence of children's progress, photos are only taken with the Pre-School equipment. They must then be downloaded onto pre-school memory sticks, where they are stored securely.

Photos cannot be used or passed on outside the pre-school.

Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones or electronic recording Media or devices to take photographs within our setting (please see Images (Capturing) Policy)

## **INTERNET SAFETY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING STATEMENT**

At Footprints pre-school, we recognise the exciting opportunities that technology can provide for the children in our care and the way we communicate to parents/carers/staff.

We take e-safety very seriously. We aim to minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations being made against staff and to make aware and support parent/carers in e-safety. (please see Internet Safety and Social Networking Policy)



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CHILD PROTECTION/SAFGUARDING/STAFF BEHAVIOUR POLICIES

The pre-school monitors and evaluates all Policies and Procedures through the following activities:

- Annual review of Child Protection/Safeguarding and Staff Behaviour policies and procedures
- Management team discussion sessions with staff
- Scrutiny of attendance data
- Regular analysis of a range of risk assessments
- Incident logs regarding children are reviewed
- Regular review of parental concerns and parental questionnaires

This policy was adopted by Footprints Pre-school

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note this is a guide to a policy and procedure. It is not meant to be directly copied and it is highly recommended that all members develop documents specific to their service and needs. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other essentials required.