



# Safeguarding Children Policy

In PLAY OUT childcare settings we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. We strive to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and we promote acceptance and tolerance of other beliefs and cultures.

The childcare setting is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

The setting aims to:

Keep the child at the centre of all we do

Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse). Staff understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour

Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children.

Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need

Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures

Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

Ensure staff understand how to identify early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures

Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate

Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest

Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards by monitoring access at all times

Ensure that children are never placed at significant risk while in the charge of setting staff

Identify any changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Code of Conduct

Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children, or living or working on the setting premises, including reporting such allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities

Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the setting and are kept informed of all updates when they occur

Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and will interact sensitively. We will devise activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group and support them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

## Reporting Procedures

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

The designated safeguarding lead will:

Contact the local authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice (if it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police)

Inform Ofsted (via the Operations Director)

Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised

Speak to the parents (unless advised not to do so by LA children's social care team)

The designated safeguarding lead will follow up with the Local Authority children's social care team if they have not contacted the setting within the timeframe set out in Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018). We will never assume that action has been taken

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Operations Director, Lead Practitioner, Local Authority children's.

## **Confidentiality**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local authority.

## **Support to families**

The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within the setting.

The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out and will always act in the best interest of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with guidance of the local authority with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

## **Allegations against adults working or volunteering with children**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the setting premises regardless of whether the allegation relates to the setting premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Operations Director instead.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly.

### **Monitoring children's attendance**

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern.

Parents should inform the setting prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the setting on the day so the setting management are able to account for a child's absence.

If a child has not arrived at setting within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the further emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the local authority children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children's attendance to be logged so that we know the child is safe.

**Please refer to your childcare setting for a full copy of this policy.**