



Sure Start Children's Centre

Child Protection Policy



Sure Start Children's Centre

Policy Approved And Adopted By: Oak Meadow and Strawberry Meadow Children's Centres Partnership Board

Due For Review: October 2011 (Amended June 2010, reviewed October 2010)

Members Of Staff Responsible For Implementation And Review :

Clare Quirke / Debbie Simmons

Oak Meadow and Strawberry Meadow Children's Centres have adopted the Hampshire County Council Child Protection guidance in full. It is the responsibility of the **centre manager /co-ordinators** to ensure that the guidance is understood by all adults involved with the centre.

Every children's centre in Hampshire is required to have a Lead Safeguarding Officer responsible for all child protection issues. The LSO for Oak Meadow and Strawberry Meadow Children's Centres is Clare Quirke.

The centres will provide a safe environment that protects children and minimizes the opportunity for harm to occur. Any suspicion that abuse could occur, will be dealt with in ways which respect the rights of the child and which reinforce adult responsibilities towards children.

Principles

- All children have a right to be protected from abuse.
- Where there is conflict between the interests of the child and the parents, the interests of the child will be held as paramount.
- A child is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse if the basic needs of the child are not being met, through avoidable acts or omissions.
- Abuse includes: neglect, physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse.
- Abuse can involve children from all cultures, religions and social classes.
- Centre staff and volunteers who are in daily contact with children are well placed to notice signs of abuse.
- Abuse is best dealt with via an inter-agency approach.
- Once abuse is confirmed the aim should be to minimise damage to the child and to promote recovery.
- A disclosure by a child, in confidence, must be passed on to the Safeguarding Liaison Officer (SLO).
- If a child discloses abuse they should be listened to and not probed for further information.
- If a child discloses abuse, he / she should not have to repeat the information to other members of staff.

Prevention

At the centre we aim to create an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to.

In order to achieve this we will:

Exclude known abusers

It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the centre that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that all applicants are subject to rigorous safer recruitment procedures.

All applicants who work within the centre, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed and every interview will include an accredited 'safer recruitment' trained panel member. Before an appointment is made, at least two references will be sought.

All applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, will need to provide explanations. All appointments will be subject to clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the centre is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

Ensure good practice

Children will be 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 will support children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

We will listen to children.

We will work in partnership with parents.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Children's Centre staff will be trained and supervised according to their job role and all staff will be made aware of the possible indications of abuse or neglect and of the procedure for dealing with suspected cases.

Children's Centre staff must follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Services. Full details can be found on the following link: <http://www.4lscb.org.uk>.

Responding to concerns

If through conversation or other contact with a child, a member of staff suspects physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a child the staff member will:

- Listen to what the child says and be comforting and sympathetic. Ensure that the child feels as little responsibility as possible.
- Write down exactly what the child says or what actions have caused concern and sign and date it.
- Not make assumptions about who the allegation might concern and ensure the child is safe.
- Inform the SLO of any suspicions.
- All matters concerning children must be reported to the nominated SLO, or, if not available, the Centre Manager/Co-Ordinator.

If a child arrives with injuries the staff will;

- Ensure immediate medical attention, if necessary.
- If possible, ask the parent/carer how the injuries occurred.
- Accept explanations, however puzzling.
- Make a written record using diagrams if helpful and including stated explanations and staff responses. Time and date the record.
- Bring to the attention of the SLO.
- Tell the SLO if they suspect that the injuries have been caused by assault or by failure to protect the child.
- That person will refer, without delay, to the Hantsdirect team, 0845 6035620 or the out of hours Emergency Service, 0845 6004555, to make a referral to the Children's Services Department.

Subsequent Action

Following a child protection referral, enquiries will be undertaken by Hampshire County Children's Services Department and possibly the police. Staff may be required to provide statements and attend an Initial Child Protection Conference. All telephone referrals should be followed up using the inter-agency referral form within 24 hours.

Confidentiality

The safety of the child is paramount. Information must be shared with other childcare professionals if it is in the interests of keeping the child safe. All child protection records will be locked securely and accessible only by designated centre staff.

Social care contacts

The public contact number for Hampshire County Council Children's Services social care enquiries is 0845 603 5620. This line is open Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm. Outside of these hours, the contact number is 0845 600 4555.

For children's centre staff there is a direct line to the social care teams. This number can be found in the Children's Centres Management Handbook (section 6.2.11), and is not available to the public.

Allegations against staff

Procedures relating to allegations against staff are in line with Hampshire County Council guidance *Dealing with allegations against staff and significant concerns about staff conduct* (2006). In the event of an allegation or concern about a member of staff's conduct with a child, the matter should be raised with the children's centre leader. If the allegation or concern is about the centre leader then the matter should be raised with the Quality and Performance Officer (QPO) responsible for the centre. In either event the centre leader or QPO will discuss the matter with the Local Authority Designated Officer on 01962 876 265.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Body map

Appendix 2 - Flow chart from DCSF leaflet "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused?"