6 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures

06.1 Responding to safeguarding or child protection concerns

The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool is Emma Pell and Laura Norman.

Safeguarding roles

- All staff recognise and know how to respond to signs and signals that may indicate a child is suffering from or likely to be suffering from harm. They understand that they have a responsibility to act immediately by discussing their concerns with the designated safeguarding officer or a other named designated safeguarding officer.
- Emma and laura are the designated safeguarding officer The designated safeguarding officer is also responsible for liaising with local statutory children's services and with the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- All concerns about the welfare of children in Cottontails preschool at home, or elsewhere should be reported to the designated safeguarding officer or the back-up designated safeguarding officer in their absence
- The designated safeguarding officer ensures that all educators at Cottontails Preschool are alert to the indicators of abuse and neglect and understand how to identify and respond to these.
- The setting should not operate without an identified designated safeguarding officer being available in person or phone call at any time.
- If it is not possible to contact the designated officer, action to safeguard the child is taken first.
- Issues which may require notifying to Ofsted are notified to the designated officer to decide regarding notification. The designated officer must remain up to date with Ofsted reporting and notification requirements.
- If there is an incident, which may require reporting to RIDDOR the designated officer immediately seeks guidance from the owners/directors/trustees as appropriate. There continues to be a requirement that the designated officer follows legislative requirements in relation to reporting to RIDDOR. This is fully addressed in section 01 Health and Safety procedures.
- Cottontails Preschool follow procedures of Cambridgeshire County Council Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) for safeguarding and any specific safeguarding procedures such as responding to radicalisation/extremism concerns. Procedures are followed for managing allegations against staff, as well as for responding to concerns and complaints raised about quality or practice issues, through whistleblowing and escalation.

Responding to marks or injuries observed

- If a member of staff at Cottontails Preschool observes or is informed by a parent/carer of a mark or injury to a child that happened at home or elsewhere, the member of staff makes a record of the information given to them by the parent/carer in the child's personal file, which is signed by the parent/carer.
- The member of staff advises the designated as soon as possible if there are safeguarding concerns about the circumstance of the injury.
- If there are concerns about the circumstances or explanation given, by the parent/carer and/or child, the designated safeguarding officer decides the course of action to be taken after reviewing a Child welfare and protection summary and completing a Safeguarding incident reporting form.
- If the mark or injury is noticed later in the day and the parent is not present, this is raised with the designated safeguarding officer and parents are asked what happen to the child, and to fill out an existing injury's form.
- If there are concerns about the nature of the injury, and it is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, the designated safeguarding officer decides the course of action required. Safeguarding incident reporting form is completed as above, taking into consideration any explanation given by the child.
- If there is a likelihood that the injury is recent and occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated safeguarding officer.
- If there is no cause for further concern, a record is made in the individual child's chronology and Accident Record, with a note that the circumstances of the injury are not known.
- If the injury is unlikely to have occurred at the setting, this is raised with the designated safeguarding officer who informs the designated officer.
- The parent/carer is advised at the earliest opportunity.
- If the parent/carer believes that the injury was caused at the setting this is still recorded in the Accident Record and an accurate record made of the discussion is made on the child's personal file.

Responding to the signs and symptoms of abuse

- Concerns about the welfare of a child are discussed with the designated safeguarding officer without delay.
- A written record is made of the concern. Safeguarding incident reporting form as soon as possible.
- Concerns that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm are responded to immediately and if a referral is necessary this is made on the same working day.
- If a member of staff has a concern about a child, young person, parent or carer, they must speak to the DSL immediately

Responding to a disclosure by a child

- When responding to a disclosure from a child, the aim is to get just enough information to take appropriate action.

- The practitioner at Cottontails Preschool listens carefully and calmly, allowing the child time to express what they want to say.
- Staff do not attempt to question the child but if they are not sure what the child said, or what they meant, they may prompt the child further by saying *'tell me more about that'* or *'show me again'.*
- *Reassure the child e.g. by saying 'thank you for telling me'*
- After the initial disclosure, staff speak immediately to the designated safeguarding officer. They do not further question or attempt to interview a child.
- If a child shows visible signs of abuse such as bruising or injury to any part of the body and it is age appropriate to do so, the key person will ask the child how it happened.
- When recording a child's disclosure on Safeguarding incident reporting form, their exact words are used as well as the exact words with which the member of staff responded.
- If marks or injuries are observed, these are recorded on a body diagram.

Decision making (all categories of abuse)

- The designated safeguarding officer makes a professional judgement about referring to other agencies, including Social Care using the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) threshold document:
  - Level 1: Child's needs are being met. Universal support.
  - Level 2: Universal Plus. Additional professional support is needed to meet child's needs.
  - Level 3: Universal Partnership Plus. Targeted Early Help. Coordinated response needed to address multiple or complex problems.
  - Level 4: Specialist/Statutory intervention required. Children in acute need, likely to be experiencing, or at risk of experiencing significant harm.
- Staff at Cottontails Preschool are alert to indicators that a family may benefit from early help services and should discuss this with the designated safeguarding officer, also completing Safeguarding incident reporting form if they have not already done so.

Seeking consent from parents/carers to share information before making a referral for early help

Parents/carers are made aware of Cottontails Preschool Privacy Notice which explains the circumstances under which information about their child will be shared with other agencies. When a referral for early help is necessary, the designated safeguarding officer must always seek consent from the child's parents/carers to share information with the relevant agency.

we will work in partnership with parents and carers and seek consent to share information whenever appropriate. However, where information may be required to safeguard a child, promote their welfare, fulfil a statutory duty or support effective multi-agency working, information must be shared without consent

where there is a lawful basis to do so. The welfare and safety of the child will always be our paramount consideration, and all information-sharing decisions will be proportionate where justified and appropriate

Informing parents/carers when making a child protection referral

In most circumstances consent will not be required to make a child protection referral, because even if consent is refused, there is still a professional duty to act upon concerns and make a referral. When a child protection referral has been made, the designated safeguarding officer contacts the parents/carers (only if agreed with social care) to inform them that a referral has been made, indicating the concerns that have been raised, unless social care advises that the parent/carer should not be contacted until such time as their investigation, or the police investigation, is concluded. Parents/carers are not informed prior to making a referral if:

- there is a possibility that a child may be put at risk of harm by discussion with a parent/carer, or if a serious offence may have been committed, as it is important that any potential police investigation is not jeopardised
- there are potential concerns about sexual abuse, fabricated illness, FGM or forced marriage
- contacting the parent/carer puts another person at risk; situations where one parent may be at risk of harm, e.g. abuse; situations where it has not been possible to contact parents/carers to seek their consent may cause delay to the referral being made

The designated safeguarding officer makes a professional judgment regarding whether consent (from a parent/carer) should be sought before making a child protection referral as described above. They record their decision about informing or not informing parents along with an explanation for this decision. Advice will be sought from the appropriate children's social work team if there is any doubt.

Referring

- The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool or back-up follows the LSP procedures for making a referral.
- If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, or an incident occurs at the end of the session and staff are concerned about the child going home that day, then the Police and/or social care are contacted immediately.
- If the child is 'safe' because they are still in the setting, and there is time to do so, the senior member of staff contacts the setting's designated officer for support.
- Arrangements for cover when the designated safeguarding officer not on-site are agreed in advance by Emma/Laura and clearly communicated to all staff.

Further recording

- Information is recorded using the Safeguarding incident reporting form, and a brief summary entered on 06.1a Child welfare and protection summary**.** Discussion with parents/carers and any further discussion with social care is recorded**.** If recording a conversation with parents/carers that is significant, regarding the incident or a related issue, parents/carers are asked to sign and date it a record of the conversation. It should be clearly recorded what action was taken, what the outcome was and any follow-up.
- If a referral was made, copies of all documents are kept and stored securely and confidentially (including copies) in the child's safeguarding file, or on the setting's management software
- Each member of staff/volunteer who has witnessed an incident or disclosure should also make a written statement on Safeguarding incident reporting form, as above.
- The referral is recorded on Child welfare and protection summary.
- Follow up phone calls to or from social care are recorded in the child's file; with date, time, the name of the social care worker and what was said.
- Safeguarding records are kept up to date and made available for confidential access by the designated officer to allow continuity of support during closures or holiday periods.

Reporting a serious child protection incident using Confidential safeguarding incident report form

- The designated safeguarding officer is responsible for reporting to the designated officer and seeking advice if required prior to making a referral as described above.
- For child protection concerns at Tier 3 and 4** it will be necessary for the designated safeguarding officer to complete Confidential safeguarding incident report form and send it to the designated officer.
- Further briefings are sent to the designated officer when updates are received until the issue is concluded.

Tier 3: Children with complex multiple needs, requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled.

Tier 4: Children in acute need, who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

Professional disagreement/escalation process

- If a member of staff at CottontailsnPreschool disagrees with a decision made by the designated safeguarding officer not to make a referral to social care they must initially discuss and try to resolve, it with them.
- If issues cannot be resolved the whistle-blowing policy should be used, as set out below.
- Supervision sessions are also used to discuss concerns, but this must not delay making safeguarding referrals.

- If there is a concern over the response or action (including recurrent concerns, timescales of responses or quality or process concerns) taken by the local authority, the LSPs escalation procedure should be followed.

Whistleblowing

We have clear whistleblowing procedures and will ensure everyone working with children knows how to raise concerns and that all concerns will be taken seriously and prompt action taken.

Cottontails Preschool will ensure that all staff are familiar with the whistleblowing procedure

The whistle blowing procedure must be followed in the first instance if:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject. This includes non-compliance with policies and procedures, breaches of EYFS and/or registration requirements
- an injustice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
- the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- the working environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- that information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding clauses has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

There are 3 stages to raising concerns as follows:

1. If staff wish to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories, they should normally raise this issue with their manager/designated safeguarding officer.
2. If staff are still concerned after the investigation, or the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with a Emma/Laura, they should raise the matter with Authorities required. After a concern has been raised, the manager will decide how to respond in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Normally this will involve making internal enquires first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation. LADO will be brought in if it has any concern to do with another member of staff abusing a child under safeguarding areas.

Whilst it is hoped that such disclosures will never be necessary, the setting management recognises that it may find itself in circumstances which are new to it. Each case will be treated on its own merits.

Managers' responsibilities

Managers/line managers notified of concerns under this policy are expected to:

- ensure that all staff and volunteers are familiar with the policy
- ensure that concerns raised are taken seriously;

• treat the matter in confidence, within the parameters of the case;

• where appropriate, investigate properly and make an objective assessment of the concern;

• keep the person raising the concern updated with progress, without breaching confidentiality;

• ensure that the action necessary to resolve a concern is taken;

• take appropriate steps to ensure that the employee's working environment and/or working relationship is/are not prejudiced by the fact of disclosure.

LADO will be contacted if the complaint is about another member of staff abuse a child whether this be, physical, mental,

If an issue cannot be resolved and the member of staff believes a child remains at risk because the setting or the local authority have not responded appropriately, the NSPCC have introduced a whistle-blowing helpline 0800 028 0285 for professionals who believe that:

- their own or another employer will cover up the concern
- they will be treated unfairly by their own employer for complaining
- if they have already told their own employer and they have not responded

Cottontails preschool will be made aware of LADO and the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Staff should be alert to symptoms that would indicate that FGM has occurred, or may be about to occur, and take appropriate safeguarding action. Designated safeguarding officers should contact the police immediately as well as refer to children's services local authority social care if they believe that FGM may be about to occur.

It is illegal to undertake FGM or to assist anyone to enable them to practice FGM under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, it is an offence for a UK national or permanent UK resident to perform FGM in the UK or overseas. The practice is medically unnecessary and poses serious health risks to girls. FGM is mostly carried out on girls between the ages of 0-15, statistics indicate that in half of countries who practise FGM girls were cut before the age of 5. LSP guidance must be followed in relation to FGM, and the designated person is informed regarding specific risks relating to the culture and ethnicity of children who may be attending their setting and shares this knowledge with staff.

Symptoms of FGM in very young girls may include difficulty walking, sitting or standing; painful urination and/or urinary tract infection; urinary retention; evidence of surgery; changes to nappy changing or toileting routines; injury to adjacent tissues; spends longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet; unusual and /or

changed behaviour after an absence from the setting (including increased anxiety around adults or unwillingness to talk about home experiences or family holidays); parents are reluctant to allow child to undergo normal medical examinations; if an older sibling has undergone the procedure a younger sibling may be at risk; discussion about plans for an extended family holiday

Further guidance

NSPCC 24-hour FGM helpline: 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Government help and advice: www.gov.uk/female-genital-mutilation

Children and young people vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation

Cottontails Preschool has a duty to identify and respond appropriately to concerns of any child or adult at risk of being drawn into terrorism. LSP's have procedures which cover how professionals should respond to concerns that children or young people may be at risk of being influenced by or being made vulnerable by the risks of extremism.

There are potential safeguarding implications for children and young people who have close or extended family or friendship networks linked to involvement in extremism or terrorism.

- The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails preschool is required to familiarise themselves with LSP procedures, as well as online guidance including:
  - Channel Duty guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance
  - Prevent Strategy (HMG 2011) www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011
- The prevent duty: for schools and childcare providers www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty
- The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool should follow LSP guidance in relation to how to respond to concerns regarding extremism and ensure that staff know how to identify and raise any concerns in relation to this with them.
- The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool must know how to refer concerns about risks of extremism/radicalisation to their LSP safeguarding team or the Channel panel, as appropriate.
- The designated safeguarding officer should also ensure that they and all other staff at Cottontails Preschool working with children and young people understand how to recognise that someone may be at risk of violent extremism.
- The designated safeguarding officer also ensures that all staff at Cottontails Preschool are aware of their responsibilities with regard to equality and inclusion and children's rights. If available in the area, the designated safeguarding officer should complete WRAP (or equivalent) training and support staff to access the training as offered by local authorities. WRAP training covers local arrangements for dealing with concerns that a child may be at risk of extremism and/or radicalisation.

- The designated safeguarding officer should understand the perceived terrorism risks in relation to the area that they deliver services in.

Parental consent for radicalisation referrals

LSP procedures are followed at Cottontails Preschool in relation to whether parental consent is necessary prior to making a referral about a concern that a child or adult may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. It is good practice to seek the consent of the person, or for very young children, the consent of their parent/carer prior to making a referral, but it is not a requirement to seek consent before referring a concern regarding possible involvement in extremism or terrorism if it may put a child at risk, or if an offence may have been or may be committed. Advice should be sought from line managers and local agencies responsible for safeguarding, as to whether consent should be sought on a case-by-case basis. Designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool is mindful that discussion regarding potential referral due to concerns may be upsetting for the subject of the referral and their family. Initial advice regarding whether an incident meets a threshold for referral can be sought from the relevant local agency without specific details such as names of the family being given in certain circumstances.

Consent is required prior to any individual engaging with a Channel intervention. Consent is usually sought by Channel partners, but LSP procedures should be followed regarding this.

If there is a concern that a person is already involved in terrorist activity this must be reported to the Anti-Terrorist Hot Line 0800 789 321-Text/phone 0800 0324 539. Police can be contacted on 101.

Concerns about children affected by gang activity/serious youth violence

Educators at Cottontails Preschool are aware that children can be put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in and as victims of gang violence. Whilst young children will be very unlikely to become involved in gang activity they may potentially be put at risk by the involvement of others in their household in gangs, such as an adult sibling or a parent/carer. The designated safeguarding officer at Cottontails Preschool is familiar with the LSP guidance and procedures in relation to safeguarding children affected by gang activity and ensures this is followed where relevant.

Forced marriage/Honour based violence

Educators at Cottontails Preschool are aware that forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are forced into it and will act accordingly as detailed below. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced. A forced marriage is distinct from an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage may have family involvement in arranging the marriages, but crucially the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Forced marriage became criminalised in 2014. There are also civil powers for example a Forced Marriage Protection Order to protect both children and adults at risk of forced marriage and offers protection for those who have already been forced into marriage.

Risks in relation to forced marriage are high and it is important that educators ensure that anyone at risk of forced marriage is not put in further danger.

If someone is believed to be at risk it is helpful to get as much practical information as possible, bearing in mind the need for absolute discretion, information that can be helpful will include things likes, names, addresses, passport numbers, national insurance numbers, details of travel arrangements, dates and location of any proposed wedding, names and dates of birth of prospective spouses, details of where and with whom they may be staying etc. Forced marriage can be linked to honour-based violence, which includes assault, imprisonment and murder. Honour based violence can be used to punish an individual for undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour.

In an emergency police should be contacted on 999.

Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted either by professionals or by potential victims seeking advice in relation to their concerns. The contact details are below.

- Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
- Email: fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Email for outreach work: fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk

Further guidance

Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage (HMG 2014)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf

)