SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Co-operative Childcare is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all colleagues and volunteers to share this commitment.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Definition taken from the HM Government document ‘Working together to safeguard children’ March 2013)

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. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single safeguarding policy:

1. safeguard children;
2. ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children;
3. promote good health;
4. manage behaviour;
5. and maintain records, policies and procedures.

Therefore, this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

The Co-operative Childcare will 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 and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children.

The Co-operative Childcare has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of The Nursery Manager / Area Manager, Head of Quality and Early Education or The Co-operative Childcare Group Manager at the earliest opportunity.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Childcare Act (2006)

All colleagues, including chefs, maintenance operatives and cleaners, have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, colleagues will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

In addition to this policy all nurseries must:

- have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013 [https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Working%20Together%202013.pdf](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Working%20Together%202013.pdf)
- inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises
(whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere);

- must also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations.

Nurseries should have a copy of “What to Do If You’re Worried a Child Is Being Abused summary” as a point of reference. It can be downloaded from: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DFES-04319-2006

Children can only be kept safe properly if the key agencies work together. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) help make sure that this happens.

**What is a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)?**

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were established by the Children Act 2004, which gives a statutory responsibility to each locality to have this mechanism in place. LSCBs are now the key system in every locality of the country for organisations to come together to agree on how they will cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The purpose of this partnership working is to hold each other to account and to ensure safeguarding children remains high on the agenda across their region.

**Local Authority Children's Social Care**

Local Authority Children's Social Care aim to work with parents, carers and young people to offer advice and support before a situation reaches crisis point. They also work in partnership with, and may refer to, other services and community groups, including Education, Health, Housing, Benefits Agencies and the Police.
All vulnerable children and young people have unique experiences and circumstances, which must be taken into account when providing services. Children's social care services are made up of teams of social workers and family support workers who promote the well-being of children in need and those who are looked-after by the local authority. Social workers with responsibilities for children and young people work together with professionals in different organisations to ensure they meet each individual child's needs. If you are concerned for a child's welfare, you should follow our policy and contact your Local Authority Children's Social Care team for advice.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

Children can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any nursery. All allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, colleague, student, or volunteer must therefore be taken seriously and treated in accordance with consistent procedures. Local Authorities have responsibility for ensuring there are effective procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with children, and providing advice and guidance to nurseries, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

The local authority designates an officer to support nurseries when they receive allegations against a colleague. This is the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

See Safeguarding Allegation Made Against a Colleague policy

**Did you know that...**

**In many cases, children can be protected and remain at home** - work with parents, family members and other significant adults in the child's life can make the child safe within their family.

**For a small minority of children, the child will have a child protection plan** – this is when it is agreed at a child protection conference that a child is at continuing risk of significant harm. Children’s Social Care services are then
responsible for co-ordinating the plan to safeguard the child, which involves family members, professionals and other agencies.

In a few cases, it may be judged that a child's welfare cannot be adequately safeguarded if he or she remains at home. Children’s Social Care services consult with other agencies and professionals and then may apply to the court for a care order, which commits the child to the care of the local authority. However, parental responsibility can be shared. The decision is made by the court.

If a child is thought to be in immediate danger, an emergency protection order might be granted – the police, NSPCC or Children’s Social Care services may apply to the court for an emergency order, which enables the child to be placed under the protection of the local authority. The decision is made by the court. In exceptional circumstances the police have the power to protect a child immediately without having to go to court.

Making a referral
You can make a referral via telephone (followed up in writing), fax or letter, directly to the Local Authority Children’s Social Care. They are usually known as the Assessment Team or Duty Social Worker Team.

When making a referral it is important to include as much information as possible as it will help the social worker to make a decision. Try to include examples that demonstrate your concerns as well as the risks and protective factors around the child.

Not sure?
If you have concerns about a child but are not sure whether you should make a formal referral you can call the local authority assessment team and without mentioning the child’s name or family name seek advice. This is sometimes known as a, ‘no-names consultation’. This means that you can talk the case through with a social worker, without giving the name of the child or family, although you will have to state who you are and what nursery you are from.
Following the consultation, the social worker will advise you about whether you need to make a referral. If they ask for the child’s name you must give it.

Our Responsibilities
Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such, we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and colleagues to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All colleagues will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

The Co-operative Childcare aims to:
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery colleagues (see Safer Recruitment Policy)
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times (see Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policies)
- Ensure that all colleagues are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including:
  - the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting (see E-Safety Policy)
  - by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all colleagues are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Ensure that any visitors or contractors sign in to the log and procedures are adhered to
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with colleagues and parents where appropriate.
Training
The nursery manager in each nursery is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the nursery; they are the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is responsible for liaison with LSCB. They provide support, advice and guidance to other colleagues on an on-going basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. The training must be renewed every 2 years.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (Nursery Manager) attends a child protection training course relevant to the role, which enables them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect. The deputy nursery manager must be trained and take the lead in the nursery manager’s absence. The third-in-charge must be trained and take the lead in the nursery and deputy managers’ absence.

All colleagues are trained to understand this safeguarding policy and the procedures, and The Co-operative Childcare ensures that all colleagues have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

All Colleagues are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has concerns about a child’s safety or welfare. This must be renewed annually.

Colleagues will be expected to complete the online induction safeguarding module by week two of employment. All colleagues receive regular support and supervision.

Child Protection and types of abuse
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.
Indicators of child abuse

- significant changes in children's behaviour;
- deterioration in children’s general well-being;
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- children’s comments which give cause for concern;
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child’s home; and/or
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other colleagues, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

Some signs and indicators are listed in Appendix 1; these may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated in The Child Co-operative Childcare please see Behaviour Policy.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made.

Where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure, they must not be informed and a referral will be made immediately to the local authority children’s social care. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.
Confidentiality
All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the local authority (See The Co-operative Childcare Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policies).

Support for families
- The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, colleagues and volunteers within the nursery
- The nursery 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 in the best interests of the child
- Confidential child protection records kept on a child should be stored securely and separately from the child's day-to-day records. These records should only be shared under the direction of the local authority. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Support for Children
- Children will be supported by their key person and other appropriate colleagues, offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.
Support for Colleagues

- The Co-operative Childcare has teamed up with 'Life and Legal' who operate the 'Safe Hands' support programme and can guide you through any issues or concerns by offering practical help and emotional support. All calls are treated in the strictest confidence and the Society does not have access to any information that you discuss.

- Safe Hands is a dedicated 24/7 personal line CALL 0843 208 4568.

- A legal advice help line, managed by a team of qualified lawyers can advise you and give you information on any legal issue, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. CALL 0800 073 1171.

This policy will be reviewed annually.
Review Date: June 2014

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 01 June 2013
Mike Abbott
Group Manager Childcare