Hannah Currant Child Protection Policy

This child protection policy and procedure forms part of our safeguarding children arrangements.

Aims (A)

Hannah Currant considers that the welfare of the child is paramount and it is the duty of Hannah Currant under HM Government’s Working Together to Safeguard children 2015 to implement this policy, and to ensure that it has in place appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and young people and protect them from abuse

Implementation and Monitoring

Hannah Currant will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the setting and will liaise with local statutory children’s services agencies as appropriate

Hannah Currant will undertake child protection training and this to be updated every 3 years.

The CP policy must be part of the induction for all staff and volunteers.

Hannah Currant will review this policy annually, to ensure it is being implemented

If Hannah Currant is uncertain about concerns about a child, consultation with Early Help should take place.

Definitions of Abuse:

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child.

The 1989 Children Act recognises four categories of abuse:

Physical Abuse - actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images.

Emotional Abuse - severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child’s health or development, including failure to thrive.

Other recognised categories of abuse:

Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse (either sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) which occurred in the past.  This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse.  The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

Domestic Abuse

Staff may be working with children experiencing violence at home. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the symptoms listed in section A.  Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing First Response.

Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships, but the welfare of the child is paramount.  The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to abuse to themselves.  Therefore, confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the child.

 All information that has been collected on any child will be kept locked and secure and access will be limited to the appropriate staff, management and relevant agencies.

In the event of an investigation it is essential that no information on child protection concerns relating to a child are disclosed inappropriately.  Any such leaks could have serious consequences for both the child concerned and any investigation.

If uncertain about what information may be shared, take advice or refer to Bristol’s Information Sharing protocol. (Please see Further Information section for a link.)

Whilst parents / carers have the right to see any records kept on their child, this might not always be appropriate and should not put the child or yourself at risk.

It is very important that only those who need to know, actually know, to avoid rumour and gossip that could affect the child, parent / carer and the group.

Protecting Children and Young People (B)

Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people.  There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned.  Hannah Currant should be alert to the following types of behaviour in the children:

* Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy.
* Seeming to be keeping a secret
* Significant changes in children’s behaviour
* Deterioration in children’s well-being
* Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect.
* Any bruising on a non-mobile baby
* Unreasonable fear of certain people or places
* Acting out in an inappropriate way, perhaps with adults, other children, toys or objects
* Children’s comments which give cause for concern, e.g.: inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or burns
* Self-harm
* Sexually explicit language or actions
* Are upset, withdrawn or angry after using the internet or texting
* Children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions

Hannah Currant should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations.  It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances.

 If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to investigate and decide if it is abuse.  It is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

What to do if Abuse is Disclosed

Hannah Currant is committed to ensuring that she meets her responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively.

* Stay calm.
* Listen to what the child / young person is actually saying.
* Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
* Ask Open questions, g.: Can you tell me why you are upset? Can you tell me what is frightening you? Can you tell me why you don’t want to go home today? Open questions enable you to gain information and clarification.
* Don’t ask leading questions. This could lead a child to say something or agree with you wrongly. A closed question is: Are you afraid to go home because your Mum will hit you?
* Do not ask the child / young person to repeat what they have they told you, for another worker or committee member; as if the matter is to be investigated further it will be done so by trained professionals.
* Do not promise the child that this information can be kept secret, as subsequent disclosure could then lead to the child feeling betrayed.
* If appropriate explain to the child who you are going to tell and why. If the child asks what might happen next, it is ok to say that you don’t know, but that you can be there to support them if they want.
* Make a note of any conversations with the child, trying to make these as detailed as possible, including when and where the conversations took place. Draw a diagram, if appropriate, to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person shows you, trying to indicate the size, shape and colour.
* Record as soon as possible and use the actual words used by the child.
* Keep all records factual. Be aware of not making assumptions or interpretations of what the child / young person is telling you.  Store all records securely.
* Discuss your concerns with the Designated Senior responsible for child protection. If the allegations implicate the senior worker, the concerns should be discussed with the next tier of line management - the named committee member responsible for child protection (the Child Protection Officer. This must be reported as soon as possible to the LADO.  See details in the Staff allegations section)
* If appropriate, inform parents / carers that you are going to report your suspicions / concerns. This might not always be possible and should not put the child or yourself at risk.  When you report an incident, the Action and Response team will ask you if the parent / carer has been informed. If they haven’t, they will want to know the reasons why.
* If possible, you, or your Designated Senior, will report this information to an appropriate agency.
* Action and Response will assess your call and pass you onto an appropriate agency. This will be Social Care if it is a Child Protection issue or Early Help if the concern is at a lower level but a multiagency response is needed. Action and Response may also signpost to other services or even ask you to plan to support the child at the lowest level.
* Once the referral has been made, if appropriate, you can tell the child what is going to happen and what to expect.

What to do if Abuse is Suspected

If any signs or symptoms lead you to feel concerned that a child may be being abused or neglected, it is important that you record these (what, when & where) and share these concerns with the Designated Senior or the Early Help Team.

Decide a plan of action:

* Ongoing observation of the child noting any further concerns.
* Discussion with other staff to gain further information they may have.
* Discussion with Parents/carers to establish if there might be reasons for the child’s behaviour /actions.
* Keep an open mind and avoid assumptions about the source of the harm.
* If you or the Designated Senior is uncertain about whether the concern is reportable, call the Early Help Team for advice.
* If you are still concerned about the welfare of the child / young person, this information must be passed on to Action and Response. Parents / carers should be informed unless you think this could put the child or yourself at risk.
* If Action and Response has been contacted and they pass you to Children’s' Social Care, they should let you know that they are responding to what you have told them. It is unlikely that you will be told what action has been taken unless it has implications for the setting. If you have not heard from the Social Care team, it may be appropriate to contact them to ensure that the details you gave them have been taken into consideration and acted upon.

What to do if it is an emergency

If you think a child is in immediate danger you should telephone the police on 999. In all other circumstances you need to refer the matter to First Response and follow the procedure described in sections above.

In a medical emergency your first action may need to be one of the following:

* Telephone for an ambulance, or,
* Ask the parent to take the child to the hospital at once, or,
* Take the child yourself

 The child is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer and they must be involved as soon as practical, unless to do so would put the child at immediate risk of harm. Having taken the necessary emergency action it is important that you make immediate contact with First Response. If it is out of office hours, contact the Emergency duty team.

Working with Children and Young People (C)

Recognising inappropriate behaviour in staff, volunteers and other adults.

There is no guaranteed way to identify a person who will harm children. However, there are possible warning signs. These may include:

* Paying an excessive amount of attention to a child or groups of children, providing presents, money or having favourites
* Seeking out vulnerable children, e.g. disabled children
* Trying to spend time alone with a particular child or group of children on a regular basis
* Making inappropriate sexual comments
* Sharing inappropriate images
* Being vague about where they have worked or when they have been employed
* Encouraging secretiveness

There may be other sources of concern; this is not a conclusive list. If you are concerned about another staff member or volunteer’s behaviour you need to pass this on to the Designated Senior.

If a Staff Allegation is made, or you Suspect a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour:

If it appears that a staff member or volunteer has:

* behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or,
* possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or,
* behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children

then these procedures must be followed:

* Record your concerns and report them to the Designated Senior.
* The Designated Senior should take steps to ensure that during the remainder of the working day that particular member of staff is not left in sole charge of the children or any child.
* It may be clear in some cases, where a child has been injured and/or there is clear evidence of significant harm or risk of significant harm, that an immediate referral must be made to the police, Action and Response or emergency services. In addition:
* The Designated Senior must then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) WITHIN 1 WORKING DAY of receiving the report of an allegation.

Recruitment and employment of Staff and Volunteers

We acknowledge that paedophiles and those that pose a threat to children may be attracted to employment that allows them access to children and young people.  As part of this policy we will ensure that people working with the children are safe to do so.

* All staff (including the setting’s Manager/Leader) and volunteers will be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service on joining the scheme, to be renewed every 3 years.
* All people connected with the setting must declare all convictions/cautions incurred since DBS disclosure which may affect their suitability to work with children.
* Providers must also meet their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which includes a duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.