**CHRIST CHURCH PLAYGROUP**

## Child Protection Policy

**Child Protection**

We comply with the procedures approved by the local London Safe-Guarding Children Board. We intend to create in our playgroup an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately responded to. The setting will ensure that staff are aware that Child Protection is the duty of everyone. In order to achieve this we will:

###### Exclude known abusers

It will be made clear to applicants for posts within the playgroup that the position is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All recruitment will be made according to our Safer Recruitment Policy which outlines the action the Playgroup will take to safeguard and protect the children at every stage of the recruitment process.

All applicants, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide 2 references. All such references will be followed up.

All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a 3-month probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the playgroup is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.

Suitability checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers. Staff will not be allowed to work until they have submitted Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks (previously known as CRB).

Changes to the Playgroup Management Committee are notified to Ofsted within 14 days. DBS checks are then obtained via Ofsted for all Committee members and the staff responsible for Child Protection within the Playgroup keep a record of all such DBS checks.

Evidence of DBS checks carried out through Ofsted on all students and agency staff is obtained by the setting. The setting may also process DBS checks.

All staff on a probationary period will work under strict supervision and will not be left unsupervised with the children at any point.

Staff are subject to an annual appraisal.

There is a ‘whistle blowing’ system to encourage staff to share their concerns about colleagues without fear of repercussions.

Unauthorised people cannot enter the premises. Visitors to the setting are recorded.

Our named persons for child protection are:

Josie Edwards – Organiser

Zarah Bishop – Second Child Protection Officer

It is their role to advise and support staff and parents and to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is fully implemented and followed by all staff. The Playgroup is committed to providing resources and time to enable the named person(s) carry out their role and responsibilities.

## Training

We will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the group to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse

**Prevent abuse by means of good practice**

Adults will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or with small groups. An adult who needs to take a child aside will leave the door ajar.

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 enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches. Children will be encouraged to explain if they feel upset or worried.

The layout of the playroom(s) will permit constant supervision of all children.

**Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse**

The Playgroup will always respond swiftly to suggestions of child abuse.

If any worker, management committee member or parent has concerns about a child’s welfare they must inform the named person for child protection. The staff member and the named person will then collect further information about the concerns.

The first concern will be the child. Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to, reassured and helped to understand that they themselves are valued and respected and have not been at fault. Care must be taken sensitivity. It is important not to influence any outcome either through the way the child is spoken to, or through asking leading questions.

Changes in children's behaviour/appearance will be investigated.

Parents will normally be the first point of reference, but if they are not in a position to allay any legitimate anxieties, the matter will also be taken up with the Social Services Department. Ofsted must also be contacted by telephone and informed.

In exceptional circumstances, the Social Services Department may be the first point of reference.

Following telephone referral, the form ED:CP1 must be completed and sent immediately to Social Services. Copies should be sent to Education Welfare and the Deputy Head of Early years at the latest within 48 hours. If an immediate referral is required in the absence of the named person, deputy named person or senior member of staff, the concerned staff member should make the referral and complete the referral form as above.

An ED:CP1 will be sent within 48 hours to confirm a telephone referral.

Following the referral, staff will work with Social Services. They will attend case conferences as required, and maintain contact with any allocated social worker to monitor the child’s progress and be aware of any subsequent concerns.

If any member of staff believes that a decision by the named person not to refer a matter of concern was wrong, they should refer the matter directly to Social Services themselves, and then inform the named person they have done so.

All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved will be the member of staff/keyworker, the Playgroup Leader and the Management Committee Chair.

If a volunteer or member of staff is accused of any form of child abuse, s/he will be interviewed immediately, by the person in charge of the group. The person accused may choose to attend the interview accompanied by a friend or colleague and to seek advice from a union representative. The interview will usually be with the Playgroup Leader, but if the allegation is against The Leader, The Committee Chair may conduct the interview. The person against whom the allegation is made will be informed of the allegation and will immediately be suspended on full pay while an investigation is made. Investigations will be in line with the local London Safe-Guarding Children Board (LS-GCB) procedures and conducted in conjunction with the LS-GC. Confidential records will be kept of the allegation, and of all subsequent proceedings.

The matter must be discussed with the Head of Early Years Service Senior Designated Member of Staff for Child Protection or in her absence her deputy.

If misconduct towards a child by a staff member or volunteer is proved disciplinary procedures will take place. The Management Committee will use the Protection of Children Act procedures if a staff member or volunteer is dismissed for child protection reasons.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

**Statement on FGM**

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as:

“all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons”.

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for who FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse.

Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure. Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk of, or has undergone FGM should result in a child protection referral to Islington’s Children’s Social Care (0207 527 7400).

For supplementary guidance please refer to the London Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding Children at Risk of Abuse through Female Genital Mutilation (2007)

<http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures/>

**Procedures**

* Where there is a concern about a child’s welfare or wellbeing, or a concern that a child is in need of protection, then this should be recorded on the proforma and this should be passed to one of the designated officers for action. These running records should be kept separately to the child’s admission form and stored in a locked cupboard
* All staff and volunteers are aware they MUST report concerns immediately; this is covered in their induction.
* All concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially in the office in chronological order
* Parents may request to see these records

**Keep Records**

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual on-going records of children's progress and development. The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child: timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation; where possible, the exact words spoken by the child; the dated name and signature of the recorder.

Such records will be kept in a separate file and will not be accessible to people other than the Playgroup Leader, Chair and Keyworker or other member of staff as appropriate.

## Liaise with other bodies

The Playgroup operates in accordance with guidelines laid down by the registering authority. Confidential records kept on children about whom the playgroup is anxious will be shared with the Social Services Department if the Playgroup feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided.

The group will maintain ongoing contact with the registering authority, together with names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers, to ensure that it would be easy, in any emergency, for the playgroup and the Social Services Department to work well together.

Records will also be kept of the local NSPCC contact, or other contact(s) as appropriate.

## Confidentiality

All concerns are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know, whether within or outside the setting. All records are stored separately from the child’s main file in a secure place. Any further concerns about the attendance or welfare of the child on the Child Protection Register will be reported to Social Services

The Management Committee is not informed of any details of concerns, or the family they relate to, but a representative of the management committee who has an understanding of child protection matters will be told that a referral has been made.

**Support families**

The Playgroup will take every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the group. Where abuse at home is suspected, the Playgroup will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed.

Confidential records kept on a child will be shared with parents.

With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the Playgroup will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.

## Duties under other policies and liaison with other bodies

The following other policies, advice and information and forms for liaison with other bodies are available, if required:

* What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (Department of Health)
* London-wide Area Child Protection Committee Procedure Committee (to be revised as Safeguarding Procedure)
* CEA@Islington Child Protection Procedure

All staff are expected to be aware of and use these documents.

Ofsted – 0300 123 3155

Social Services - 0207 527 7400 Out of Hours – 0207 226 0992

This policy was updated by the Playgroup Committee in June 2017.

Signed on behalf of the Playgroup .....................................................