

# 1. Safeguarding and Child Protection



## 1.1 Safeguarding children and child protection

Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff and Prevent Duty (Extremism, Radicalism and British Values)

If you have concerns about a child, they must be reported. Phone Somerset Safeguarding Children Board on 0300 123 2224 or Somerset Children's Services on 0300 123 2224. **If a child is in immediate danger, phone 999.** Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. **IF IN ANY DOUBT, SPEAK OUT.**

## Policy statement

Comeytrowe Under Fives will work with children, parents and the community to protect the rights and ensure the safety of children.

### EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

### Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Comeytrowe Under Fives Preschool Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.

#### Key commitment 1

Comeytrowe Under Fives Preschool is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

### ***Staff and volunteers***

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:

**Emma Willmont**

Our Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) who support this work is:

**Bryony Murphy**

Our Committee Safeguarding Lead is:

**Lizzie Slevin**

- We ensure all staff are trained every two years to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are aware of them too. This is delivered as a whole staff team by the DSL and DDSL who attend Working Together training, every two years.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023*) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP).
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
- We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
- We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.

- We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
- All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones) and whistleblowing.
- Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age-appropriate way.
- All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- We follow Safer Recruitment protocols in respect of recruiting and inducting new staff; namely:
  - Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
  - Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
  - Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
  - All permanent applications for work within the preschool will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide at least two references; one being from their most recent place of employment. They will also need to provide confirmation of their right to work in the UK.
  - All permanent appointments will be subject to a six-month probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the Preschool is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with the children.
  - We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.

- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children, whether received before or during their employment with us.
- We record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - ✓ The Disclosure and Barring Service reference number
  - ✓ The date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - ✓ Details of whom obtained it.
- Volunteers and students do not work unsupervised.
- From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are **no longer** required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
- Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We have security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
- We take steps to ensure our children understand British Values and our staff are aware of their duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism under Section 26 of the Counter Anti-Terrorism Act and the procedures to do so.
- All staff undertake annual Prevent Duty training.

- All staff receive and read the monthly Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Learning Bulletin.

### ***Key commitment 2***

Comeytrove Under Fives Preschool is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

### ***Responding to suspicions of abuse***

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect (including bullying and cyber bullying).
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
  - significant changes in behaviour
  - deterioration in their general well-being
  - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure)
  - changes in their appearance, their behaviour or their play
  - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
- We are aware of possible safeguarding issues, such as:
  - fabricated or induced illness
  - child abuse linked to belief in spirit possession.
  - sexual exploitation of children
  - modern slavery and human trafficking
  - female genital mutilation

- gang activity
  - child trafficking
  - cuckooing
  - county lines
  - radicalisation
  - contextual safeguarding
  - private fostering
  - Abuse linked to faith e.g.: witchcraft
  - Child on child abuse
- While some of these issues are unlikely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
  - We are aware that there are other issues, in addition to those named above, and we access the latest information from SWCPP and SSCP in order to maintain an up-to-date awareness of safeguarding issues.
  - We actively protect children and teach them to value British Values by recognising and valuing the universal uniqueness of all individuals and we are mindful to instil learning and resilience to protect children against the development of extremist and radicalised thinking and behaviour.
  - Where we believe a child in our care or known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedure for reporting child protection concerns.
  - Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting's leader who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored in a Confidential Safeguarding file.
  - We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police, or another agency identified by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
  - We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children. We use the strategy TED (Tell, Explain, Describe).
  - We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 2004. This may include students or school children on work placement, young

employees or young parents. Where abuse or neglect is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

- All staff are also aware that adults can be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need to community care services.
- All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline if they feel that the organisation and the Local Authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child, and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.

### ***Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures***

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), staff observe signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action (The child will be helped to understand that they are valued and respected and not at fault or blame)
  - does not question the child; use TED (Tell, Explain, Describe)
  - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
    - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
    - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible (capturing the voice of the child)
    - describing objectively the child's behaviour/ appearance without comment, judgement, interpretation or speculation
    - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time

- the names of any other person present at the time
- the name, age and address of the child.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in a confidential safeguarding file which is kept secure and confidential with restricted access for authorised personnel only - the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and the Committee Safeguarding Lead.
- We adhere to the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership stipulations for recording and sharing concerns.

***Making a referral to the local authority social care team (will be done by DSL)***

- Staff use the Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset, "Levels of Need" flowchart & guidance, and The Family Strengths and Needs Toolkit to identify the appropriate steps they must take to meet the child's needs once they have been identified. This document is updated regularly so the most recent version is referred to in order to reflect the current guidance.
- When a member of staff has concerns about a child's well-being, they will first discuss them with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. With parental consent an Early Help Assessment may be completed in order to identify support needs.
- The preschool 'Child Protection Record' is a detailed form for making a referral to the local Children's Services team, as well as recording concerns. This is based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015) and up to date information given on Safeguarding Children courses.
- We keep a copy of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given. Information is displayed on the notice board in the foyer and on the staff notice board.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): [sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk)

Children's Social Care - 0300 123 2224

Early Help Advice Hub - 01823 355803

Consultation Line for DSLs and GPs - 0300 123 3078

Email - [children@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:children@somerset.gov.uk)

Police - 101 or in an emergency 999



### ***Informing parents***

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents where we make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral is made, except where the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents.
- If parents are unable to allay any legitimate anxieties that the Preschool may have then these matters will be notified to Social Services.
- In exceptional circumstances, as outlined above, Social Services will be the first point of reference or in cases where the Preschool consider the child to be in danger or at risk of harm the police will be called for immediate assistance

### ***Liaison with other agencies***

- We work within the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines.
- Practitioners from the setting may be involved in Team Around the Child / Family (TAC/ TAF) meetings with professionals and the child's parents when additional needs have been identified.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015) for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- If any child under a child protection plan is absent for more than 2 days, the key person's social care team must be informed.

### ***Allegations against staff and persons in a position of trust***

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We ensure that all staff, volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people, including staff/colleagues.
- We follow the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to the LADO if necessary and cooperate fully with their investigations and advice.
- Where the management committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.

### ***Disciplinary action***

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

### **Key commitment 3**

Comeytrove Under Fives Preschool is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### **Training**

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, child on child abuse, neglect and vulnerability to radicalism and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure the designated person receives training in accordance with that recommended by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- A copy of this policy is included in the induction pack for staff, students and volunteers which they sign to say that they have read.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and regular discussion at staff meetings.
- DBS checked members of our preschool
- staff are the only members of staff allowed to take a child to the toilet. No adult, other than appointed individuals, will be allowed either to take a child to the toilet or to be left alone with them.
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and learning ways to express their own feelings. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist/reject inappropriate approaches.

### **Planning**

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

- Staff change children in the main cloakroom area in the ladies' toilets. They are required to inform other staff that they are going out to change a child and which one. Details are logged of date, time, details of the care provided, who changed the child and their signature in the intimate care folder.

### **Curriculum**

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe, including visits from community police etc to discuss safety issues.
- We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

### **Safe Sleeping**

Sleep and rest times are key times in the day for being close and promoting security. Younger children will need to sleep but older children do not usually need to. No child is made to sleep.

- Children sleep on individual rest mats/cushions. Covers are washed after each use.
- Nappies changed prior to sleep and heavier clothing and shoes are removed.
- Hair accessories that may come loose or detached are removed before sleep/rest time.
- A separate area is risk checked and made quiet, lights turned off and blinds are drawn.
- Children are settled by a qualified member of staff and comforted to sleep.
- If children fall asleep in-situ it may be necessary to move or wake them to make sure they are comfortable, they are not left to sleep in a buggy.
- Sleeping children are regularly checked at least every ten minutes and are within sight and/or hearing of staff.

## **Confidentiality**

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and in line with data protection regulations (GDPR 2018).
- In accordance with the Staff Behaviour Policy, mobile phones and cameras of staff, visitors, students and volunteers are kept in their bags in the office on silent and are not used whilst in the premises. The only time a staff member may have a mobile phone is on a small group outing; used only when another staff member is present in the case of an emergency, or (outside of preschool hours) to take photographs of the children's displays for the preschool website or Facebook page. This is set out in detail in our Media Usage Policy.

## ***Support to families (and staff)***

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team. This is in the Parental Agreement which all parents sign.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- We recognise that staff involved in child protection issues may feel vulnerable themselves and find situations stressful and upsetting and therefore will ensure that during supervision sessions and walk in sessions with the designated safeguarding lead, they have an opportunity to talk and seek further support as appropriate.

### ***Unexplained Absence***

In the event of unexplained and unplanned absences, for example if there is a break in the child's normal attendance pattern with no explanation, the Preschool will contact the family after the first incidence of absence and ascertain the reason for non-attendance and share any concerns. A contact log should be kept of attempts to make contact.

### **Legal framework**

#### *Primary legislation*

- Children Act (1989 s47) (2004 s11)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working in education settings (2015)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Prevent Duty (2016) (Counter Terrorism)
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency Regulations 2018

#### *Secondary legislation*

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations
- Equality Act (2010)

- Criminal Justice and Courts Act (2015)
- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)

### Further Guidance

- What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Somerset (2021)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners (2018)
- Ofsted safeguarding policy (2018)
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (2018)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings (2018)

This policy was updated at a meeting of **Comeytrowe Under Fives Preschool Management Committee**

Held on:	<b>7<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>
Date to be reviewed:	<b>January 2026</b>
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee:	
Name of signatory:	<b>Sarah Greenslade</b>
Role of signatory:	<b>Chairperson</b>



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Charity Registration Number: 1019847



Ofsted Registration Number: 143065

