Sue Scarbro's Safeguarding Children policy

Rationale

Our first responsibility and priority is towards the children in our care and their welfare and well-being is paramount under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989, Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 and the government document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. Child abuse happens to children and young people of both sexes, at all ages and in all cultures, religions and social classes and both to children and young people with and without disabilities. Abuse includes the risk of peer-on-peer abuse (bullying) which may happen in person or online. If we have any cause for concern, we will report it, following the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) procedures to LADO@plymouth.gov.uk.

This childminding setting includes other adults who work with minded children. These adults may be registered assistants, apprentices or co-childminders. As the registered childminder, I take the lead responsibility (designated safeguarding lead), for safeguarding children within the setting, ensure that policies and procedures are fit for purpose and that all members of staff receive relevant appropriate advice, support, guidance and training. Any safeguarding concerns must be communicated to the designated person(s) without delay.

Other adults who do not have a DBS Check or equivalent will never have unsupervised access to minded children. The only exception to this would be in an extreme emergency when parents have given their express permission.

Procedure

Every worker in this setting is familiar with the relevant local procedures and is aware of where to find the most updated information. The procedures can be found by viewing the Safeguarding Partners (LSP) website: www.plymouth.gov.uk.

This setting has regard to the government's statutory guidance documents: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. The setting also has access to other helpful documents such as 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'; and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. These documents would be referred to if a relevant situation arose.

We are aware of the indicators of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, or a mixture of these types of abuse; and of specific situations that may indicate that the main categories are involved, such as domestic abuse, forced marriage, peer on peer abuse, substance misuse, gang activity, female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, breast ironing, radicalisation and extremism. We are aware that inappropriate adult behaviour may constitute the grooming or conditioning of children for an abusive interaction.

Children who have special educational needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse due to factors such as lack of communication skills, reliance on others for intimate care and limited social experiences. We recognise the need to consider changes of behaviour and not attribute them to their disability but consider abuse as for any other child.

As a registered childminding setting, we have a duty to have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This duty is known as the **Prevent Duty**. If we have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of radicalisation, extremism or being drawn into terrorism, we can seek advice from the Department for Education's dedicated helpline on 020 7340 7264 or email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. If we identify patterns of behaviour that lead us to believe a child or young person is engaged in an ideology, is intent in causing harm or is capable of committing violent acts, the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team will be contacted.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a practice that takes place worldwide in at least 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East. It also takes place within parts of Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily among immigrant and refugee communities. Women and girls from UK communities that are at risk of FGM include those whose families originate from these countries Early years practitioners are required by law to report to the police known cases of (FGM) involving a girl under the age of 18 as it is illegal in the UK.

Breast Ironing or flattening affects 3.8 million women around the world. It is carried out mainly in Cameroon and other African countries and in Britain in families who originate from these areas. Breast Ironing was made illegal in the UK in July 2019. When girls reach puberty, their breasts are pounded using hard instruments such as spoons or stones which are sometimes heated in the fire before hand, in order to slow down or prevent the breasts developing. Breast Ironing can cause extreme physical and mental side effects that can last a lifetime.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) affects girls and boys up to age 18 and involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person receives something (eg food, money, drink, drugs etc) as a result of them performing, on another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Grooming for CSE can happen online or in person.

It is estimated that 27,000 children in the UK are involved in **Gang Activity.** Children in gangs are often linked to drugs and violence and may be linked to radicalisation. Much of the grooming to recruit new gang members is through schools, where they target children who are not known to the Police.

If we are concerned that a child in our care is a victim of FGM, Breast Ironing, CSE or gang activity we will refer report this immediately to the local MASH/Children's Social Care team.

We aim to provide an environment where all children feel safe and can talk to us when they are worried about anything, enabling us to provide or seek any additional support that may be required. Any instances of discriminatory or derogatory language or behaviour (including language that is about disabled people or is homophobic or racist) will be challenged and an explanation given as to why it is unacceptable.

The designated safeguarding lead will keep up to date with child protection issues and relevant legislation by completing frequent refresher training courses and regularly check that they have the latest version of the relevant procedures by accessing them online. Staff will either complete training themselves or the information will be disseminated to them from the designated safeguarding lead. All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, are registered with the Safeguarding Partners (LSP) to receive e-mails alerts and/or e-newsletters informing them of any changes. This helps us to ensure that we are kept to date and stay aware of the signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if we have a concern.

We understand that children will be absent from the setting for varying reasons. For some children, repeated unexplained periods of absence; or leaving unexpectedly can mean that they are subject to, or at risk of, abuse or exploitation. We use attendance records to monitor children's attendance and absences and will report any concerning periods of absence to the local MASH/Children's Social Care team.

With the increase in usage of information technology (IT) within today's society, it is vital to safeguard children against potentially harmful exploitation. Any electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities used within the setting has appropriate filters in place to

protect children from harmful online material. We will tell children that we understand that the internet is a great tool for fun and learning but that they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them. We use the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) ‘Share Aware’ information to help us understand the apps, games and networks that are commonly used by children of different ages and the potential dangers with these. If we become aware of a situation that is potentially abusive, it will be reported to the local MASH/Children’s Social Care team by the designated safeguarding lead. In order to help protect children and adults online, I refer to the Government information 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations’.

Consent for taking photographs and the use of these images if applicable, will be given by parents/carers in our consent agreements. We use photographic equipment including the setting specific, designated safeguarding lead’s or personal mobile phone(s)/Smartwatch to take images of a child’s development. These images will only be stored and used in line with parental written consent. The setting is registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office as a data controller, which means we abide by strict guidelines for the storage and use of photographic images.

All photographic devices used in this setting will be password protected with only relevant persons having access to the password. We aim to ensure that any photographic equipment, including the settings mobile phones/Smartwatch, are not accessible to anyone else without permission.

When the setting mobile phone(s)/Smartwatch are used as a phone(s), they are only used for essential calls enabling us to always meet the needs of the children.

We ensure that all minded children are protected against exploitation from others by never leaving a child alone with an individual who is in possession of a camera or photographic device, including Smartwatches which may be used inappropriately (children will not have access to mobile phone(s)/Smartwatches whilst in our care without permission).

Staff are not permitted to bring any photographic equipment into the setting apart from a personal mobile phone/Smartwatch which they should seek permission to use for personal reasons during working hours if necessary. This will be monitored by the designated safeguarding lead to ensure children’s safety.

Parents/carers must notify us of any concerns they have about their child and any pre-existing accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded and signed by the parent/carers(s) on the day of entry.

If the designated safeguarding lead is concerned about a child's welfare and wishes to discuss their concerns, they may contact the NSPCC or other relevant local support services for advice including the local MASH/Children's Social Care team. Confidentially will be assured only when there is no risk of harm to a child. In the case of an emergency, the police will be contacted directly.

If we notice:

- significant changes in children's behaviour
- unexpected bruising or marks or signs of possible abuse
- any comments made which give us cause for concern
- deterioration in general well-being which causes concern
- signs of neglect or abuse outside the setting
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by any other child/young person encountering the child

The designated safeguarding lead will keep a factual record of the concern and will ask the parents/carers for an explanation, and signature, on the same day, providing it would not put the child at risk. They will implement the Safeguarding Partners procedures without delay to minimise any risk to the child. Unless they believe it may place the child at risk, they will advise the parent/carers that they intend to make a referral.

If a child tells us that they or another child is being abused, we will:

- acknowledge their allegation and reassure them that it will be taken seriously
- encourage the child to talk, without prompting or asking them leading questions. The child will not be interrupted when they are recalling significant events or made to repeat their account. We may use questioning techniques which involve using non-leading, open–ended questions that start with **T**ell, **E**xplain or **D**escribe known as the TED questioning techniques.
- explain what actions must be taken, in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child

- record what has been disclosed using exact words where possible
- make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion

The designated safeguarding lead would then report the concerns immediately to the local MASH/Children's Social Care team who have the experience and responsibility to assess the situation.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely in accordance with my confidentiality policy.

In all instances, a record will be made of:

- the child's full name and address
- the date and time of the record
- factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present
- details of any previous concerns
- details of any explanations from the parents/carers
- any action taken such as speaking to parents/carers

If an allegation of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises or elsewhere is made, it will be reported to Ofsted/the childminder agency and include the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at least within 14 days of the allegations being made. The Safeguarding Partner's (LSP) procedures will also be followed including reporting it directly to the Designated Officer (DO) within 1 working day of the allegation being made. The settings insurance company will be contacted, together with any local support that is available.

Whistle Blowing

Inappropriate behaviour by anyone working in the setting will be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead and the procedures above will be followed. If the safeguarding lead is observed displaying inappropriate behaviour then the observer must report the incident directly to Ofsted/Childminding Agency and the DO following the procedure stated above.

If anyone in working in the setting are in a public environment and observe inappropriate

behaviour by another practitioner, they will be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead and the procedures above will be followed.

The designated safeguarding lead will also, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service when a member of staff is dismissed or would have been, had they not left the setting first because they have harmed a child or put a child art risk of harm.

It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate a situation ourselves.

Childminder‘s Signature: SScarbro

Date: January 2025