



## Child Protection Policy

Stepping Stones Pre-School believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or a young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to a practice which protects them. This policy runs alongside our Safeguarding Children Policy, and incorporates the same commitments that this policy intends to deliver.

### We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### The purpose of this policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Stepping Stones Pre-School's services, including the children of the adult members.
- To provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk or harm.

This policy applies to all staff including Management and members of the Stepping Stones Committee, paid staff, volunteers, supply staff, students and anyone working on behalf of Stepping Stones Pre-school.

### We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

## Definition of Child abuse

It is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18. Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child:

1. Physical abuse: This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. It includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning, drowning or smothering. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol.
2. Emotional abuse: This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth.
3. Neglect: This is when a child's basic need for love, food, warmth, safety, education and medical attention is not met by parents or carers.
4. Sexual abuse: This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or a young person. It can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic materials is also a form of sexual abuse. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is also a form of sexual abuse, in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status (see NSPCC full definition of CSE).

Bullying, racism, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other types of discrimination are also forms of child abuse. They can harm a child physically and emotionally.

## Responding to signs of Abuse.

We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of the children. Our staff will:

- Listen carefully
- Record the conversation in the child's words and note the time
- Sign and date the record they make
- Take it seriously
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell
- Explain what will happen next
- Records of this information are kept on the Child's personal file, are kept secure and confidential. The Stepping Stones Designated Safeguarding officers (Sarah Howard and Charis Sim) will be given this written record, and ensure that the child is safe and will seek medical attention if necessary.

## Informing Parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time the report is made, EXCEPT where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the Stepping Stones designated officer (Sarah Howard) will contact the Local Authority – Single Point of Access (S.P.A) to formally log the suspicion.

## Allegations against Staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers, which may include an allegation of abuse. An

allegation of abuse may come from another member of staff, a parent or a child. It is the duty of the Pre-school to ensure the safety of all children while maintaining a respectful relationship with the staff involved.

- We will respond to any allegation by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer at Stepping Stones may have taken place, or is taking place, by recording the disclosure of the alleged incident (as above).
- We will follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- All concerns must be raised with the Stepping Stones designated Officer (Sarah Howard – Stepping Stones Manager) on duty. However, if your concern is regarding this person, you should contact:

**Single Point of Access (S.P.A)**: 020-8547-5008 (Mon-Thurs 0845-5pm; Fri 0845-4.45pm). Out of hour's service: 020770500.

**Stepping Stones Committee Chair**: Bryn Regan 07970296438

**OFSTED**: 0300-1231231 (General Helpline); 0300-123-4666 (to report an allegation). (Our registration number is EY152868)

**NSPCC**: 0808-800-5000 (Open 365 days, 24 hours a day).

- If an allegation is made against a member of Stepping Stones staff, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**: Viv Rimmer must be contacted (02085475243) who will advise and assist with the investigation. The LADO will contact the LSCB.
- The member of staff involved, will be asked to leave the premises pending the investigation. No further disciplinary action will be taken at this point until the outcome of the investigation is concluded.
- The investigation will be led by the Stepping Stones Manager.
- If it seems likely on the "balance of possibilities" that abuse had taken place, then the individual concerned will be immediately dismissed and referred to the Protection of Children's Act (PoCA) by contacting the relevant Early Years Support Team.
- OFSTED will be informed of all stages of the investigation from the initial allegation to the investigation outcome.
- If the allegation is determined to be false, the member of staff will be provided with all the necessary support to return to work. In this event, the person who has made the allegation feels the outcome of the situation or response of the Pre-School or the Local Authority is inappropriate, they should contact OFSTED for further advice/investigation.
- Staff and Parents can be assured that their concerns will be treated in strict confidence, but promises cannot be made if it is deemed serious enough that additional support is need to aid the investigation

### Confidentiality

The legal principle that the "welfare of the child is paramount" – Privacy and confidentiality will be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety will come first.

### Other concerns

Sometimes concerns may not be about abuse, there may be a concern about a child's or family's risk of poverty, or getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability or needs extra help. In these instances you seek help by using the Common Assessment Framework.

## **Contact Information**

- Single Point of Access (S.P.A): 02085475008
- [safeguarding@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 02085475243
- OFSTED: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Tel 0300-123-1231 (general help line) 0300-123-4666 (to report an allegation)
- Early Years Advisory Service: 020854775215
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Ming Zhang 02085475243

## **Legal framework:**

### **Primary legislation**

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act 2006

### **Secondary legislation**

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equalities Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015

## **Further guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (DfE 2015))
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People: A Guide for Practitioners(CWDC 2010)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)

- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services(DfE 2015)
  - Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)
  - NSPCC: Preventing abuse – What is child sexual exploitation (CSE)?
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**At Stepping Stones Pre-School we recognise our responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, The Sex Discriminations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations between children, staff, parents and the local community. The promotion of equal opportunities is the responsibility of the whole Pre-School and must be reflected throughout the organisation of the Pre-School. It is addressed in the curriculum and in areas beyond the curriculum.**

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This policy was adopted by	Stepping Stones Pre-School	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	<u>17<sup>th</sup> November 2015</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	<u>November 2016</u>	<i>(date)</i>