

# Happy Times After School Club Safeguarding Policy

Happy Times After School Club is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation.

The Club will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. The Club's child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by Reading's Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) Phone 0118 937 3641 (Option 1) E-mail [cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures.

There is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) available at all times while the Club is in session. The DSL coordinates safeguarding and child protection issues and liaises with external agencies (eg SocialCare and Ofsted).

The Club's designated DSL is Surjit Bains. The Deputy DSL is Mar Lopez.

## **Child abuse and neglect**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues

will overlap with one another.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

### **Mental Health**

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Staff should also be aware of any changes to a child's behaviour and question the reasons behind the changes.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken.

### **Signs of child abuse and neglect**

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, eg in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation (FGM), or that the child may have witnessed domestic abuse

- inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

#### **If abuse is suspected or disclosed**

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not question them
- give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- record the incident as soon as possible (see *Logging an incident* below)

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the matter straightaway using the **Logging a concern** form. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the Club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

All staff recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability or language barriers, They may also feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. Our staff recognise this and where they have concerns about a child they will raise these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

#### **Child -on child abuse**

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Child on child abuse is taken seriously by the staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people. Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people.

The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of Child on Child abuse:

- sexual activity (in primary-aged children) of any kind, including sexting
- one of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (eg much older)
- one of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (eg in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength)
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliancy or secrecy.

**If child on child abuse is suspected or disclosed We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.**

#### **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse, and is therefore dealt with as part of our existing safeguarding procedures. All of our staff receive training in how to recognise when girls are at risk of FGM, or may have been subjected to it.

#### **If FGM is suspected or disclosed**

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse. We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse and will make a

report to Children's social care directly.

## **Extremism and radicalisation**

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, eg:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

## **Signs of radicalisation**

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material

If a member of staff suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a concern** form, and refer the matter to the DSL.

## **Logging an Incident**

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name and date of birth of the child involved a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words
- name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Club's DSL who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

For concerns about **child abuse**, the DSL will contact Social Care. The DSL will follow up all referrals to Social Care in writing within 48 hours. If a member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Social Care directly.

For minor concerns regarding **radicalisation**, the DSL will contact Local Authority - Reading's Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) Phone 0118 937 3641 (Option 1) E-mail [cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) , Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Board.

For more serious concerns the DSL will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns the DSL will contact the Police using 999.

## **Allegations against staff**

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- Records should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate, the Club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Promoting awareness among staff**

Happy Times Club promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training. The Club ensures that:

- the designated DSL has relevant experience and receives appropriate training (including online safety) in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it
- designated person training is refreshed every two/three years
- safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff
- all staff have a copy of this **Safeguarding policy**, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation
- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation
- all staff receive basic safeguarding training, and safeguarding is a permanent agenda item at all staff meetings
- all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty
- staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which is kept in the paperwork filing cabinet.
- the Club's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020)' and staff are familiar with 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)', keeping children safe in Education part one. All staff sign to acknowledge having read and understood this Document.

Staff are required to read the "Anti-bullying" and "Behaviour" Policies and sign to acknowledge having read these policies.

### **Use of mobile phones and cameras**

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission. Only the club camera will be used to take photographs of children at the Club, except with the express permission of the manager. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones to take photographs at the Club. Manager will be allowed to use the phone for the sole purpose of taking photographs of the activities but these will not include children. For more details see our **Mobile Phone Policy**. Neither playworkers nor children may use their mobile phones to take photographs at the Club. To protect staff and children, personal mobile phones can only be used by staff if they are expecting an important phone call from doctors etc and they will leave the room to take the call with prior consent from the Manager. If any staff member has concerns about a child being the victim of online abuse or witnesses inappropriate behaviour

linked to online technology, a safeguarding form will need to be completed and DSL informed. We will aim to support children and families about online safety.

Smart watches which connect to the internet, should also not be worn during sessions where children are present, by either staff or children. On rare occasions technology may be used with staff supervision to access technology. Filtering and monitoring of technology is a vital part of ensuring children are not accessing harmful or illegal content on our devices (The DSL has chief responsibility for this).

Contact numbers Social Care: West Berkshire - 01635503090; Reading - 0118 937 3641;  
Social Care out of hours contact: 01344 786 543 Berkshire LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): 0118 974 6141(Wokingham); 01635503153 (West Berkshire); 01189373555 (Reading), LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Partnership):  
<http://www.wokinghamlscb.org.uk/> (Wokingham); <http://www.westberkslscb.org.uk/> (West Berkshire); <http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/> (Reading)  
Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)  
Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321  
NSPCC: 0808 800 500  
Ofsted: 0300 123 1231  
<https://proceduresonline.com/berks/>

This policy was adopted by: Happy Times After School Club	Date: July 2024
To be reviewed: July 2025	Signed: Surjit Bains, Club Manager

Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024) Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Child Protection [3.4-3.8] and Suitable People [3.9-3.13]