

Brackenagh Busy Bees Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Children Order (NI) 1995 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a child (1989) states that

“Provision of services and protection from abuse are basic rights and must be offered to all children regardless of race, culture, language, gender, disability and religion.

Statement

At Busy Bees Playgroup we are committed to the safe practice of protecting children from harm. All staff, students and volunteers in the organisation recognises and accepts the responsibilities associated with developing awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

Aims

Our aim is to keep all children and adults safe and free from all types of abuse. We are vigilant in this and we have the person's needs at the forefront of all the things we do.

This Policy has been based on the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland regional Policy and Procedures 2021.

Designated Officer: Sarah McConnell

Deputy: Julie Beck

All staff at Busy Bees Playgroup are trained in Child Protection and this is updated every 3 years.

Role of Designated Officer

The Designated Officer checks any concerns that may have been disclosed or observed. They will then speak with the Gateway Team Duty Social Worker to share the concerns and follow any advice given. This will be done by working alongside parents/colleagues etc., depending on the severity of the case and only when it does not place the child at any further risk.

They will also consult with the Gateway team for the Southern Health Trust Region.

All child protection concerns should be discussed with the Gateway Team who will make the decision whether to involve other professionals.

If deemed necessary, information may be passed on without parental consent if staff have a reasonable concern that a child may be at risk.

Social Services have the right to access our Children's details regarding any protection issues that may arise.

ABUSE

Abuse falls into 5 categories:

- 1) **Child Exploitation**
- 2) **Emotional**
- 3) **Neglect**
- 4) **Physical**
- 5) **Sexual**

In order to recognise signs of abuse we feel it is important to know the children in our care, so that signs can be picked up that indicate all is not ok.

It is not easy, but if you know your children e.g. their pattern of behaviour, are they quiet/boisterous by nature, and if they trust you it can be easier.

There may be different reasons as to why a child is behaving in a different way and at Busy Bees Playgroup we respect the parents/guardians of every child and where possible we will talk to them regarding things we notice.

The following information is taken from the SBNI (2021)

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse where children and young people (boys or girls) are tricked or forced into taking part in sexual activity for something in return.

The 'something' could include things like attention, love, food, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol or money. These things can be given in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing that they are agreeing to what they are being asked to do or that they are in a loving relationship. This is called 'grooming'. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused

Some of the warning signs that a young person may be at risk of being exploited include:

- Having a much older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Being asked to keep secrets by this person
- Receiving calls/messages from people you don't really know, asking to meet up
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Being given money, alcohol, drugs or nice presents
- Staying out late or going missing for long periods of time

- Being persuaded to get involved in crime
- Sexual behaviour that is not appropriate for your age.

Child trafficking and exploitation

Child trafficking is when young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

What is child trafficking and exploitation?

Child trafficking and exploitation are types of child abuse.

Children and young people can be trafficked into the UK from other countries, and also within their own country to a different town or village, or within the same town or village. Those who traffic others could work alone, be part of a small group or a large organised group.

If you've experienced child trafficking and are being exploited it can be really hard to recognise what's happening. You may feel trapped and like you have to do something you're uncomfortable with or don't want to do.

Some of the things you could be forced to do are:

- have sex or perform sexual acts – this is called sexual exploitation
- work (for example in a factory, restaurant or someone's house)
- beg, steal or commit crime
- grow, carry or deal drugs
- sell your organs
- force you to marry someone

Signs of exploitation

Some of the ways someone might trick you into doing something might include:

- giving you nice things and then telling you that you owe them
- organising for you to be robbed of a drugs package and telling you that you owe them
- having control of your identification documents or money
- blackmailing you because they have sexual videos or pictures of you
- threatening you or your family

2. Emotional Abuse

This would happen, for instance, when a child is always being unfairly blamed for everything, or told they are stupid and made to feel unhappy.

What is emotional abuse?

Some examples of emotional abuse are when someone:

- calls you names

- keeps shouting at you, even if you haven't done anything wrong
- puts you down
- ignores you or leaves you out of things
- says or does things that make you feel bad about yourself
- makes you feel like you don't belong
- makes you take responsibility for things you shouldn't have to do until you're older
- treats you differently from your brothers or sisters
- puts you in dangerous situations
- is aggressive and violent to other people in your family and you seeing this happening
- stops you from having friends

Remember

- You don't have to put up with it
- No-one has the right to make you feel bad
- It's never your fault when someone is emotionally abusive to you.

3. Neglect

Every child and young person has the right to be looked after properly. If you're not getting the important things you need at home, it could be that you are being neglected.

What is neglect?

There's a difference between things we want and things we need. Some people might want a new games console or a new phone but these aren't things you need. You need things like:

- clean, warm clothes
- enough to eat and drink
- protection from dangerous situations
- somewhere warm, dry and comfortable to sleep
- help when you're ill or you've been hurt
- love and care from your parents or carers
- support with your education
- access and help with medication, if needed.

Your parents or carers should make sure you have these things.

You also shouldn't have to spend a lot of time looking after other people in your family without getting any support from an adult.

If you have a disability you should also be supported in whatever extra ways you need.

There could be lots of reasons why you are being neglected. Your family may be doing their best. But they might just not have enough money. Maybe someone who looks after you has a problem with alcohol or drugs. Or maybe they are having problems with their physical or mental health.

Whatever is happening, it is not your fault, and you can get help.

4. Physical abuse

If someone deliberately hurts or injures you or another person, it's physical abuse.

What is physical abuse?

If someone deliberately hurts or injures you or another person, it's physical abuse. You might be told that it's your fault, or that they are punishing you. But nothing makes it okay for someone to hurt you. Abuse is never your fault.

How physical abuse can affect you

Physical abuse can leave you with more than marks on your body. It can lead to you feeling:

- frightened or anxious
- depressed or sad
- lonely and isolated
- like you want to self-harm or run away
- angry
- worthless or like you have no self-esteem
- unable to eat normally
- unable to sleep properly
- numb or like you have been cut off from your feelings
- unable to concentrate at school or college
- guilty and worried that it is your fault – even though it isn't

These feelings can last long after your injuries have healed. And this can stop you living your life and enjoying yourself. But you can get help and support.

Telling someone helps

Talking about abuse is difficult. But it helps. Telling someone what's going on means you don't have to deal with it on your own. Most importantly, telling someone can help stop the physical abuse. It also means you can start to live a life that's happier and safer.

5. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone is forced, pressurised or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with another person.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse can happen online or in person.

Example of sexual abuse include:

- being touched in a way you don't like without giving permission or consent
- someone exposing themselves to you online or offline
- being forced to have sex (intercourse)
- being forced to look at sexual pictures or videos
- being made to do something sexual or watch someone do something sexual

Facts about sexual abuse

- It can happen to both girls and boys
- Someone could be sexually abused by a stranger, somebody you love and trust or a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Someone could be sexually abused by a person of the same sex
- Sexual abuse isn't always 'full sex' – it can also include touching, kissing, oral sex or anything sexual
- Sexual abuse can happen online as well as offline
- You're not alone and there are people who can help you.

Sexual abuse is wrong. It doesn't matter how many times it happened, how long ago, or whether the abuser is male or female, it's still important that you get the help and support you need. It's never too late to tell somebody.

Telling someone helps!

Do make sure you discuss them with the Designated Officer or the Early Year Team.

As members of staff we take on a supportive role NOT an investigative role.

Judgements and investigations about suspected abuse must be left to the professionals.

As staff at Busy Bees Playgroup, we are obligated to record and report any signs of abuse that are worrying us.

As parents, you are obligated to do the same, and to talk with the Designated Officer about any concern you may have.

Information CAN be passed on without parental consent if staff have a reasonable concern that a child may be at risk of, or is suffering abuse or neglect and therefore in 'significant harm'.

Remember

No mobile phones. Camcorders or cameras are to be brought into the Pre-school room, except for the camera that is used by the Busy Bee Playgroup to photograph the children at play, and parental permission is always sought with the Permission Slip section of the settling in documents.

This is to protect the children from pictures and videos that may be taken with ill intent.

What to do if you are concerned

- Do NOT compromise confidentiality
- Do NOT over question the child, or ask leading questions – just listen and let them talk to you
- Explain to the child (if old enough to understand) what you must do next in terms of reporting this
- Make notes at the time on paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Record any injuries or bruises noticed on a diagram showing position and extent
- NEVER remove a child's clothing to look at any marks there may be
- Record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions
- Note who and when the suspicions were reported to
- Report and give evidence to the Designated Person
- Record the report given to the Designated Person, ensuring to sign and date this

Reporting the Concern

The person reporting the concern will follow all the steps above.

They then will contact the Gateway Team, also informing our Social worker, Aine.

A record will be kept on file on all reports passed on.

ADULT PROTECTION

Allegations made against Staff by other Colleagues

The member of staff making the allegations will be asked to record the incident.

Remember to sign, date and give to the Designated Person.

The member of staff the allegation is made against will be given the opportunity to put forward their version of events.

All information should be correctly recorded, signed and dated.

If the incident is then reported on to the professionals (The Gateway team, Social Services or PSNI), with the child's safety being paramount, the member of staff will be suspended on full pay pending investigation.

However, it is the responsibility of the Committee to continue to offer a supportive role until such times when a decision is made.

(Protocol for passing on information is the same as previously stated)

Should the allegation be made against the Designated Person then you can report it immediately to the Gateway Team, Social Services or the PSNI.

Allegations made against Staff by Parents

Parents will be asked to write a record of the incident and report to the Designated Person.

The Designated Person will then follow the correct protocol and guidelines.

Protocol for Collecting a child from Busy Bees Playgroup

(See Arrival and Departure Policy)

We MUST have permission from the parent/guardian if someone other than the names listed are collecting a child from Busy Bees Playgroup.

The person collecting a child MUST be over 18 years of age, or the parent of that child. We will also not allow children to leave with someone we feel has been under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Please respect these rules and follow them accordingly!

Toileting

At Busy Bees Playgroup we follow strict guidelines to prevent any Child Protection Issue arising, especially in relation to toileting.

If a child has wet or soiled themselves and needs changed, 1 staff member will assist the child, with another staff member in full view of the situation, ensuring the safety of the adult and the child.

The toilet door is always left open, and any changing will be done in the main area of the bathroom, allowing another staff member to oversee the situation.

- Due to Covid-19 Staff will wear PPE as appropriate

All efforts are made to keep the children and adults safe!

Remember

- Observe
- Listen
- Record
- Report

The welfare of the child is paramount and overrides ALL other considerations