Policy

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.2 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Policy statement

Gaddesby School Community Limited (GSC) Settings will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people* and vulnerable adults. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Procedures

GSC will carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the GSC Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

Key commitment 1

GSC are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

- Our designated person (deputy manager) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is: LISA WILKINSON, (DSL). She is also supported by Elizabeth Hadfield (Deputy DSL) (staff member).
- The designated person is always available to discuss any concerns staff may have. However, when the setting is open, but the designated person or support person is not on site, staff can contact them - their telephone numbers are available to all staff. If concerned, staff are instructed to telephone the displayed safeguarding telephone numbers for support.
- Please be aware, DSL should not be contacted if concerns involve their family member. If this situation arises, alternatively there are two trained DSL's, an advice number or Manager to support.
- Our Manager, Linda Dunmore oversees these roles.
- The designated person and suitably trained deputy ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations, with regard to safeguarding.
- The designated person (and the person who deputises for them) understands the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) safeguarding procedures and attends relevant LSCB training updating their knowledge of safeguarding regularly.
- GSC will ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC. Staff receive updates on safeguarding regularly, safeguarding children is incorporated in GSCs induction procedure.

- All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
- All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2018) and can identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
- All staff understand LSP's thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm.
- All staff understand how to escalate their concerns if they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard.
- All staff understand their responsibilities under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, understand relevant 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.
- GSC will support families to receive appropriate Early Help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation
- GSC will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns
- GSC will be transparent about how we lawfully process data

- GSC 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 mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
  - 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.
  - Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.
  - Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
  - Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
  - Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
  - Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
  - Volunteers must:
    - be aged 17 or over;

- be considered competent and responsible;
- receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
- be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
- be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.

- Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
  - the criminal records disclosure reference number.
  - certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate.
  - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - details of who obtained it.

- All staff and volunteers are informed 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).
- From August 31st 2018 all staff and volunteers are not required to notify us 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, and this includes discussion of any safeguarding issues and their performance and learning needs, which are reviewed regularly
- In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour
- GSC will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
- Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
- Security steps are taken to ensure that GSC have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Steps are taken 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, including our website. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child. Staff do not use personal cameras or personal equipment to record images
- Personal phones are not used where children are present
- Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).
- The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place. Please see policy – 1.6 Online Safety.
- We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
- We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.

- The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
- The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern; however, this should not delay any referrals being made to children's social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (UK) (LADO), Ofsted or RIDDOR.

Key commitment 2

GSC are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations 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

- GSC acknowledges that abuse of children can take many different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, neglect, peer on peer abuse, sexual violence, harassment, bullying (including cyber bullying), sexting and any form of initiation ritual.
- GSC ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection. Staff will look 'through' a child's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) when looking for signs of abuse.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
  - significant changes in their 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.
- GSC understands the need to refer a child who meets the s.17 of the Children Act 1989 child in need definition to the Local Authority Children's Social Work Services
- GSC are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent's learning disability.
- GSC understand how to identify children who may need early help, how to assess services for them
- We are aware that children's vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children's social care team.
- GSC are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. Staff will take immediate action to contact the parent to seek an explanation for

the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child's parents and there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSP's procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with Social Care, the Social Worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

- GSC are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, GSC follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- GSC are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police.
- GSC are also aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, GSC may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- If we become concerned that a child may become a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, we will refer to the national referral mechanism NRM, as soon as possible and refer or seek advice to the Local Authority Children's Social Work Service and/or police.
- We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors GSC will follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns and follow the LSCB procedures.
- 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 member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- If a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
- GSC refer concerns about children's welfare to the local authority children's social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB: In some cases, this may mean the police, or another agency identified by the LSCB.
- GSC take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

- GSC will take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected GSC will follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but our 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 also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who need community care services.
- We have a whistleblowing policy in place.
- Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing; if they feel that the organisation has not acted adequately in relation to safeguarding, they can contact the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) whistleblowing helpline.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give 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 act;
  - does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
  - 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; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within one working day.
- Where the LSP's stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, GSC will include their procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the LSCB.

Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team

- The Early Years Learning Alliance's publication *Safeguarding Children* contains procedures for making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as a template form for recording concerns and making a referral.
- GSC keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our LSP's, which GSC follows, where local procedures differ from those of the Early Years Learning Alliance.

Escalation process

- If GSC feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the LSCB escalation process.
- We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.
- We will follow local procedures by LSP's to resolve professional disputes

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child at risk or interfere with the course of a police investigation. Advice will be sought from social care if necessary.
- Parents are informed when GSC make a record of their concerns in their child's file and that we will 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 will be made, except where the guidance of the LSCB does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.
- If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response), the designated person will seek advice from children's social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

Liaison with other agencies

- GSC will work within the LSP's guidelines.
- The current version of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
- GSC have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
- GSC notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
- Contact details for the local NSPCC are also kept.

Allegations against staff

- GSC will ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
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- GSC will respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
  - inappropriate sexual comments;
  - excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- GSC will follow the guidance of the LSCB when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
- We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints
- we respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person on the premises, which includes

  -inappropriate sexual comments,

  -excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has

  -behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child

  -possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

  -behave towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- GSC will ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We will respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
- GSC will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or 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.
- GSC will refer any such complaint immediately to a senior manager within the organisation and the LADO to investigate and/or offer advice: This information is found on the staff notice boards
- GSC will also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted (unless advised by LADO that this is unnecessary due to the incident not meeting the threshold), as well as what measures we have taken. GSC are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- GSC will co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the management team and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended 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. Where it is appropriate and agreed with LADO we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

Disciplinary action

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, GSC will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

GSC is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Training opportunities are sought 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 (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
  GSC's Designated person will receive appropriate training every 2 years and refresh skills annualy, as recommended by the LSP's, refreshing their knowledge and skills regularly.
- GSC will ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
- Ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at regularly.

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 within sight and/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

Curriculum

- GSC will 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 so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- GSC will create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- GSC will ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

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 LSP's and in line with the GDPR Data Protection Act 2018.

Support to families

- GSC believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- GSC will make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- GSC will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- GSC will follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social worker in relation to the settings designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- We will engage with any Child in Need Plan or Early Help Plan as agreed.
- 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 LSCB.

Legal framework

Primary legislation

- Children Act (1989 s47)
- Protection of Children Act (1999)
- The Children Act (2004 s11)
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England)Regulations 2018

Secondary legislation

- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- General Data Protection Regulations(GDPR) (2018)
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Further guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG, 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG, 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 Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018)
- Hidden Harm – Responding to the Needs of Children of Problem Drug Users (ACMD, 2003)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)
- Disclosure and Barring Service: https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-applicant-criminal-record
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HMG, 2015)
- Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings, (Ofsted, 2016)

This policy was adopted by	GSC
On	November 2022
Date to be reviewed	November 2023
Signed on behalf of the provider	GSC LTD
Name of signatory	L Dunmore
Role of signatory	Manager

A 'young person' is defined as 16 to 19 years old – at GSC this maybe a student, worker, volunteer or parent.