



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Footprints Pre-school playgroup intends to create an environment where children are safe from any abuse and neglect. Our two designated Safeguarding persons are Jayne Bray and Anne Herat.

Prevention

Vetting: All staff and committee members are checked with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and applicants are made aware that they are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Any known abuser would be excluded from working at Footprints.

All applicants for work at Footprints are asked to provide two references which are taken up before an appointment is made. Explanations are sought for gaps in employment or frequent job changes. Each appointment is subject to a probationary period and only be confirmed if Footprints is confident that the employee can safely be entrusted with children.

Education and relationships: All staff receive training in recognising possible symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have a concerns. Leaders also attend Interagency Child Protection training. Training is regularly updated.

All Footprints staff model appropriate care of each other, helpers and visitors as well as the children. They also make it clear that abusive behaviour is not acceptable, showing the children strategies for dealing with conflict and suitable ways to show affection to others.

(See also Behaviour Management and Inclusion policies). This should help children identify whether they are being treated in an appropriate way.

Children are encouraged to develop self-esteem along with a sense of autonomy and independence by learning to make choices and to express their feelings. We aim to nurture the children's self-worth by showing that we respect them as individuals and value what they do and say. Children who have the self-confidence and vocabulary are more able to resist / report inappropriate approaches.

Footprints works hard to build trusting and supportive relationships with families, creating an atmosphere where parents/carers feel comfortable asking for advice on parenting issues and can be directed to sources of help or information.

Everyday procedures: Footprints has a Mobile Phone Policy and an Appropriate Use of Technology Policy to avoid inappropriate use of IT including camera phones. Parents / Carers and volunteers work in the presence of a member of staff. Children are only taken to the toilet by a member of staff/helper whose original, enhanced DBS disclosure has been checked by Footprints or (in the case of Inclusion Support Workers) South Gloucestershire Council. On occasions when, for a child's dignity, a member of staff needs to deal with a child in privacy for a short time (e.g. nappy or clothes changing), the door is left ajar.

We do not allow children to be collected by strangers unless the child's parents or carers have informed us.

Acting on Concerns

If a child chooses to confide in a member of staff about abuse, s/he will be listened to sympathetically, reassured and helped to understand that they are not at fault. No promise will be made to the child to keep anything secret. Under no circumstances will an adult ask a child leading questions. The child's own words will be noted and referred to designated person.

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Outside setting: Any staff member who suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect will immediately discuss this with a designated Safeguarding person who will follow Footprints' 'Safeguarding: Child Protection Procedure (A)'. If there is any doubt at all, the designated person will contact South Glos. Access and Response Team for advice. Where appropriate, concerns will be shared with the child's parent/carer but if there is any suspicion that this will put the child in danger, South Glos. Access and Response Team will be contacted immediately without informing them.

All concerns and investigations will be kept confidential, being shared only with those who need to know. If applicable, the child and family will continue to be welcome at Footprints while investigations proceed.

Within setting: If a member of staff or volunteer is accused of any form of child abuse, whether by a parent/carer or colleague, action will be taken immediately by a designated person who will follow Footprints' 'Safeguarding: Child Protection Procedure (B).'

If the person making the allegation does not have confidence that the designated person has taken or will take appropriate action, they will discuss the matter with Footprints' Chairperson who will follow the procedure. If they are still not satisfied, they must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer at South Gloucestershire Council directly.

The accused member of staff/volunteer will be suspended on full pay whilst investigations are carried out. If found guilty, they will no longer be permitted to work at Footprints and the DBS will be informed. If the allegations are unfounded, they will be supported to return to work.

Confidential records will be kept of the allegation and all subsequent proceedings.

Records

Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, these will be recorded. This confidential record will be separate from the child's learning and development profile and will include – in addition to the child's name, address and date of birth – timed and dated observations, signed and dated by the recorder, describing objectively the behaviour/appearance (and where possible the exact words spoken by the child) without comment or interpretation.

These records will be shared with the child's Parents/Carers and their comments noted and signed by them. Records will only be accessible to staff but would be shared with child protection agencies if required.

With the proviso that the safety and well-being of the child is paramount, Footprints will do all in its power to support and work with the family.

Where concerns about a child's well-being have been recorded, records must be kept in a secure place indefinitely – even if these concerns are later considered to be unfounded.

Liaising with other agencies

Footprints staff and Chairperson will work co-operatively with any agencies involved in the protection of the child.

See Also: **SAFEGUARDING – ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES POLICY;**
MOBILE PHONE POLICY.

“WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2015” Available online
SOUTH GLOS. GUIDANCE southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/children

Date reviewed.....15th Feb 2016

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