

# Spring Charity.

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## The Spring Charity

(Charity No. 1121126)

### Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. We are also committed to working in close liaison with our partner organisations, including Spring Lane Primary School, to ensure co-ordinated protection of children and families. Our Key Commitments are to creating a culture of safety, responding promptly to incidents and promoting awareness of abuse.

#### Procedures

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments.

##### *Key commitment 1*

The Spring Charity is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

##### *Staff and volunteers*

- Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is Tracey Hamilton
- Our designated officer (a member of the management team) who oversees this work is Jill Spiby.
- Our designated Trustee who has oversight of the combined Spring Lane Primary School (SLPS) and Spring Charity: Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is Carol Bull (Deputy Head Teacher SPLS)
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff and volunteers have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and attend regular Safeguarding updates.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staff and resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts with the Spring Charity are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks DBS before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We also collect relevant information on others over the age of 18 years living in the same household, who may pose a risk by association to children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:

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- the DBS reference number;
  - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
  - details of who obtained it.
- We inform staff 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).
  - We abide by Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) and Ofsted Statutory Framework (2014) requirements in respect 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.
  - We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting. All visitors must sign into the visitor book and show identification.
  - We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
  - We take steps 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. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
  - A record is kept of Trustee's DBS information and DBS updated every three years.

### *Key commitment 2*

The Spring Charity is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents 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 2006).

### *Responding to suspicions of abuse*

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- 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 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.
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs to spirit possession,

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sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.

- We also make ourselves 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, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe that a child known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the person who has a concern makes a dated record of the details of the concern (on the same day as the concern is raised) and discusses what to do with the Spring Charity designated person and/or designated officer.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB in some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We 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 we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account but the Spring Charity 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.

### *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 take action;
  - Does not question the child;
  - 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.

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- These records are signed and dated and referred to the designated person, on the same day for action and referral to the local MASH board for next steps as advised.
- Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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

- The *Early Years' Alliance's* publication *Safeguarding in the Early Years* 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. This is based on 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015).
- The Spring Charity refers to Northamptonshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

### *Informing parents*

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In such a case social workers will inform parents.

### *Liaison with other agencies*

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We work in partnership with other partner organisations including Spring Lane Primary School to co-ordinate concerns.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

### *Allegations against staff*

- We 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.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
  - Inappropriate sexual comments.
  - Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.

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- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board 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 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.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) to investigate.
- We co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the Board of Trustees agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff (or volunteer) will be suspended on full pay, 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 and Charity, as well as children and families throughout the process.

### *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, we will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) 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*

- The Spring Charity is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### *Training*

- We seek out training opportunities 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 and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

### *Planning*

- The layout of the rooms and CCTV allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

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## *Curriculum*

- The Spring Charity promotes 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.

## *Confidentiality*

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know, which will include our partner organisations, including Spring Lane Primary School. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## *Support to families*

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
- We 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.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Independent Safeguarding Authority
- LSCB website
- DfE Publication: Working Together to Safeguard Children (Published March 2015: Update July 2022)

## **Other useful Early Years Alliance publications**

- Safeguarding Children (2010)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Trustees on 16 July 2015

Revised: March 2018.

Revised: March 2020. Revised May 2023

Next Review. May 2024

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Signed on behalf of the Trustees: .....

Name of signatory: Dr Marie Dickie. Role of signatory: Chair of Board of Trustee