

Child protection policy for early years settings 2021-22

Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup's Child Protection Policy - Addendum in response to Covid-19*

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Date agreed and ratified by staff and the Committee		6 January 2022
Date of next full review		August 2022

* Based on DfE guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other provider' March 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>

This addendum will be reviewed following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures and reshared as required.



1. Context

- On 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, as part of the response to coronavirus (Covid). Schools and childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid response and cannot be safely cared for at home.
- Whilst lockdowns are currently not in place, there is the possibility that children will be kept at home for Covid exposure reasons or that further lockdowns may be necessary.
- The way Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup is currently operating in response to Covid is fundamentally different, however, our safeguarding principles in accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2019, remain the same:
 - the best interests of children will always come first
 - if anyone has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
 - a DSL or deputy DSL is available
 - unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children
- This Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup's Child Protection Policy Addendum in response to Covid-19 contains details of any amendments to our existing safeguarding arrangements.

2. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- **Name of Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Jo O'Rawe
- **Name of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):** Ali Hicks
 - Ideally a DSL (or deputy) will be present on-site however if this is not possible, a named DSL will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example working from home.
- Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, Jo O'Rawe will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.
 - This will include updating safeguarding files and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school/college.
- All staff and volunteers on-site will have access to a trained DSL (or deputy) and know on any given day who that person is, and how they can speak to them.
 - Up to date details of the DSL/Deputy DSLs will be visible to staff and children.
- The DSL/Deputy DSLs will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

3. Key Contact details

	Name	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Jo O'Rawe	Safeguarding@staplehurstunder5.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ali Hicks	Hello@staplehurstunder5.co.uk

Manager	Ali Hicks	Hello@staplehurstunder5.co.uk
Chair of Committee	Ross Best	Chairman@staplehurstunder5.co.uk

4. Vulnerable children

- Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup.
 - Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Please see DfE guidance for further information on [vulnerable children](#).
- There is an expectation that children with a social worker will attend a provision (childcare setting), unless in consultation with the child's social worker and family it is agreed this is not in the best interests of the child. Where parents/carers are concerned about the risk of their child contracting Covid, professionals will talk through these worries with the parents/carers following the advice set out by Public Health England.
- Children with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents/carers and a decision will be made about whether they should continue to attend Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup.
- If vulnerable children are not attending, we will regularly keep in contact by telephone with them and their parents/carers
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will continue to work with those professionals involved with vulnerable children and share relevant information with them such as social workers, early help workers and virtual school heads (VSH). This is especially important during the Covidperiod.
 - This will include information about attendance and any welfare concerns.
 - If there is a safeguarding concern, this will be shared with the relevant professional as soon as possible.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend Playgroup, including remotely if needed.

5. Attendance monitoring

- Local authorities and education settings need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup and social workers will agree with parents/carers whether children in need should attend and Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will follow up with parents/carers where a child(ren) are supposed to be attending but do not.
- In all circumstances where a vulnerable child(ren) does not take up their place, or discontinues, Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will notify their social worker and follow up with the parents/carers.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will also follow up with parents/carers that have arranged a place for their child(ren), that are considered vulnerable but not involved with any safeguarding systems.
 - Staff will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

6. Reporting concerns

- All staff will continue to look out for any signs that indicate a child may be at risk, both on and off site, including online.
 - If a member of staff/volunteer has any safeguarding concerns about a child(ren), this will be reported to the DSL as soon as possible.
 - If the concern is urgent, the member of staff/volunteer will speak to a DSL in person or via phone/video call if they are not on site, immediately.
 - In the event a member of staff or volunteer cannot make contact with a DSL, this will not delay them taking immediate action to safeguard a child.
 - Concerns will be recorded using existing safeguarding processes as outlined in our [Child Protection Policy](#).
- Parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns via existing processes.
- Where staff/volunteers are concerned about an adult working with children, they should report the concern to the manager.
 - If there are concerns about any member of staff or volunteer, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service will be consulted with.
 - Concerns about the manager should be directed to the Chair of Committee.

7. Safeguarding training and induction

- DSL training is available and the DSL and deputy must ensure they take their refresher training.
 - Formal DSL refresher training will be undertaken as soon as possible. DSLs will continue to keep their knowledge up to date through other means.
- All existing staff/volunteers have read our Child Protection policy and accessed safeguarding training.
 - Staff/volunteers will be made aware if any processes have changed with the sharing of this addendum and the DSL will communicate any changes to local processes directly.
- All new staff and volunteers will have an induction provided via the DSL and will be provided with a copy of the Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup's Child Protection Policy and this Covid-19 Addendum.

8. Safer recruitment

- It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children.
- During the Covid pandemic if Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup recruit new staff we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment practices.
- If volunteers are recruited Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will continue to follow the guidance in accordance with our Child Protection Policy and Volunteers who have not had the relevant checks will not be left unsupervised with a child.
- If staff from other settings volunteer or begin working at Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup we will ensure they have a relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check following DfE

guidance at this time. Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will risk assess staff from other settings, as we would for a volunteer.

- If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the Covid pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:
 - the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
 - there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
 - there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual
- In response to Covid, the DBS has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will continue to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child in accordance with our Child Protection Policy.

9. Supporting children in school

- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its learners
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. A senior member of staff will ensure that there are appropriate staff on site and that staff to learner ratios have been considered to maximise the safety of children.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will follow the current government guidance in relation to social distancing and all matters relating to public health from the respective websites and outlets
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will ensure that all children who are either categorised as vulnerable or children of critical workers and are in attendance are appropriately supported.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will continue to record any support provided to children in relation to safeguarding issues on their respective safeguarding recording system.

Peer on Peer Abuse

- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup
 - continues to recognise and respond to cases of Peer on Peer abuse by considering each incident on a case by case basis and basing any intervention on usual processes outlined in our [Bullying Policy](#).
 - recognises that the current circumstances and the changeable nature of current Government guidance may mean that the Playgroup may need to adapt elements of the process in some cases to ensure that they are able to respond in line with Government advice when required.
- The DSL will continue to consult as appropriate with multi-agency professionals to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is not compromised when incidents of peer on peer abuse are brought to their attention.

10. Supporting children not in school

- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup will continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people that remain in our register
- All DSLs will continue to identify those vulnerable children that would benefit from early help, provide pastoral support and consider whether they would benefit from external support also.

- There will be clear plans around how best to communicate with children and families of children who are identified as vulnerable, as well as those about whom DSLs have concerns about those who do not receive a statutory service.
 - This could include telephone contact and/or doorstep visits but is at the discretion of the DSLs.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup and the DSLs will work closely with all relevant agencies and professionals regarding safeguarding a child(ren) who is not on site.
 - Any plans will be reviewed regularly and if concerns become significant, the DSLs will consider any requests for support if considered appropriate.
- Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup recognises that this is a difficult time for children and young people who consider Playgroup as a safe place and the current situation may impact on learners, staff and parents/carers mental health.
- The Playgroup will utilise its website and social media presence to ensure that safeguarding messages are shared with children and their families. This will include links to appropriate services and resources that are aimed at supporting them throughout this period.

10. Additional support and links

- As well as through existing Playgroup mechanisms, children, staff, volunteers and parents/carers can access age appropriate and practical support and advice via a range of national and local services:
 - Childline: www.childline.org.uk
 - Kent Resilience Hub: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk>
 - NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-children/>

DfE Guidance

- Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers: www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers
- Vulnerable Children Guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people
- COVID-19: guidance for educational settings: www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): attendance recording for educational settings: www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings

Specific Links relating to Coronavirus for Learners and Parents/Carers

- Kent County Council: www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/coronavirus
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

- Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- Kent Children's University: Home Resources Learning Packs: www.theeducationpeople.org/blog/kent-childrens-university-home-learning-resources-pack-is-live/
- Children's Commissioner:
 - Children's guide to coronavirus: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/
 - Resources for parents during coronavirus: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/resources/
- Sport England: www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout
- Place2be:
 - www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-supporting-children-who-may-be-especially-vulnerable/
 - www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org/
- Childnet: www.childnet.com/blog/keeping-children-happy-and-safe-online-during-covid-19
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/working-remotely-advice-professionals-parents-posh-rhc
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/
- Parent Info: <https://parentinfo.org/>
- BBC Own it: www.bbc.com/ownit

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic Abuse Services: www.domesticabuseservices.org
- Victim Support: 0808 16 89 111 www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/supportline
- Look Ahead Care & Support – Service provider West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling): www.lookahead.org.uk/
- Oasis Domestic Abuse service – Service provider, East Kent. (Thanet and Dover): www.oasisdaservice.org/home
- Clarion Housing Association – Service provider for North and South Kent
 - North Kent: (Dartford & Gravesham, Swale and Maidstone) Clarion DA confidential Helpline: 07376 637069 (Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm)
 - South Kent: (Ashford, Folkestone & Hythe and Canterbury) Rising Sun Domestic Abuse service helpline: 01227 452852 (Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm)
- National Women's Aid Domestic Abuse 24hr helpline: 0800 2000247