

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Policy Statement

Guisborough Montessori 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 commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

Procedures

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

Key Commitment 1

Guisborough Montessori 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 who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is Fiona Barugh. When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy – Rachel Stroe – is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

The designated person and the deputy have the skills and knowledge to refer safeguarding concerns to the appropriate statutory and voluntary organisations as appropriate.

The DO and DDO understand LSCB safeguarding procedures, attends relevant LSCB training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.

Guisborough Montessori ensure that all staff receive robust training in safeguarding and that they understand our policies and procedures.

Parents are made aware of our safeguarding policies.

All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility. All staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators 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. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.

All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to 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 are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.

All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCB or safeguarding partners in areas where safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCB.

All staff understand their responsibility under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand 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.

We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation

We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns

We will be transparent in how we lawfully process data

All 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 they organisation expects from them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and 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 the 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 list 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 children

Where applicants are rejected based on information disclosed, the applicant have the right to know and challenge incorrect information

Volunteers

* Must be aged 17 or over
* Be consistent, 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 procedures that have been completed including:

* The Disclosure and Barring Service reference number
* Certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate
* The date the disclosure was obtained
* Details of who obtained it

All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, caution, 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 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are not required to notify their line manager 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 childcare provision or have had certain Orders made in relation to the care of their children in accordance with the childcare Disqualification and Childcare Regulations 2018, and Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2018.

Staff receive regular supervisions, which includes a discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are regularly reviewed.

In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour, outlined in the employee handbook

We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead 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 we have control over who comes into the setting so no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children

Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any 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. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.

Personal mobile phones are not used when the children are present

The designated person in the setting has the responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online policy in place

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 ensure that their role is completed to an optimum level

The designated person will refer significant safeguarding concerns at the first opportunity and in-line with statute.

Key Commitment 2

Guisborough Montessori 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 are worried a child is being abused’ (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014

Responding to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect

We 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

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 the 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 abuse outside the setting

We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help and how to access services for them

We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services

We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children’s social work services

We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol addiction 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

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

We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child’s parents to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact can be made, and the designated person believes the child is at risk of serious harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care, the social worker will be notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

We 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 the internet, Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.

In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we 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

We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers to report cases of FGM to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involve contacting police if a crime of FGM has been, or may be about to be committed.

We also make ourselves aware that some children are affected by and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be the victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with

If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice from the local authority children’s social work team 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 a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection and child in need concerns and follow the LSCB procedures, we will follow the local procedures as published by them

Where such indicators are apparent, the child’s key person will make a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the designated person. The information is stored on the child’s personal file.

In the event that a staff member of volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow the escalation procedures

We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority social care team and co-operate fully with any subsequent investigation. NB in some cases, this may mean that the police or other agencies identified by the LSCB will be the investigators

We respond to disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either way through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may clarify what we think they have told us)

We take into account 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 or neglect 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 in an age appropriate way, but the 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 when where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is only done 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 are in need of community care services

All staff know they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that either their organisation or the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures

We have a whistleblowing policy in place

Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff which gives cause for concern (disclosure) or a member of staff observes signs and signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in the child’s behaviour, deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse, the member of staff:

* Listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that they will take action
* 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 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 name 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 Designated Person is informed at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day

Where the LSCB stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps as set by the LSCB

Making a referral to the Local Authority Social Care Team

The appropriate referral form will be downloaded from the Local Authority Social Care Team website, completed and submitted in as timely fashion as possible.

Escalation Process

If it is felt that the referral has not been dealt with appropriately, 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 published by the LSCB to resolve professional disputes

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their views of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk, or may interfere with the course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances the police, where necessary.

Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child’s file and that we 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 procedures 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 when the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.

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 should consider seeking advice from children’s social care about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

We work within the LSCB guidelines

The current version of ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ is available for parents and staff, and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns

We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children’s welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers to ensure that in an emergency it is easy for the setting and children’s social care to work well together

We 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 allegation being made.

Contact details for the local NSPCC are also kept

Allegations against staff and persons in positions of trust

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting which may include allegations of abuse

We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting know how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues

We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints, and have a separate policy for responding to complaints

We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteers or any other person working on the premises, which includes:

* Inappropriate sexual comments
* Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual rle 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 that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to the child
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response

We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident

We refer any such complaint to a senior manager within the organisation and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice. You can contact the Redcar & Cleveland Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01642 130700 or email RedcarLADO@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, informing them of what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do so.

We co-operate fully 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, 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 practical and agreed with he LADO, we will seek 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 cause concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we 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

Guisborough Montessori are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through the 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 cover extra familiar threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures

Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the LSCB, every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.

We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision

We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletter, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

Planning

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being in within sight/or hearing of other staff or volunteers.

We 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.

We 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/

We ensure that this is carried out in a developmentally appropriate way 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 LSCB and in line with GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Working Together 2018.

Support to families

We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers

We make clear to parents our roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting f concerns, information sharing, monitoring of children and liaising at all times with the local children’s social care team.

We will continue to welcome the child and family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse

We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the children’s social worker in relation to the setting’s designated role and tasks in supporting that child and 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 only 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 of this policy

Primary Legislation

Children Act (1989 s47)

Protection of Children Act 1999

The Children Act 2004

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

General Data Protections Regulations (GDPR) 2018

Childcare (Disqualifications) Regulations 2009

Children and Families Act 2014

Care Act 2014

Serious Crime and Security Act 2015

Further Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018)

What to do if you are 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 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2008)

Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings (Ofsted 2016)

This policy was adopted by Guisborough Montessori on 1st October 2019 and will be reviewed annually thereafter