**Safeguarding Children Policy**

It is the responsibility of our practitioners to protect the children in our care. We believe that all children should enjoy the security of appropriate relationships with adults and children, which enable them to thrive at each stage of their development. Frome Valley Preschool has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This policy lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to any form of abuse or neglect. We believe we have a duty to the children, parent /carers, and staff to act quickly and responsibly to any concern that may come to our attention. It is the duty of any staff member to report and suspected abuse to the designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding Lead for Frome Valley Preschool is Gemma Florance, and Emma Young will deputise in her absence.

Concerns about a Child

If there is a concern about a child Frome Valley Preschool has a duty to contact the Multi-Agencies Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy will speak to the duty officer to share their concern over an incident or emerging pattern of concerns. If the initial contact is taken by Children’s Social Care (CSC) as a referral, the setting will provide a written report within 48 hours.

Physical Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if staff have a reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, and drawing or had an excessive pre­occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe maltreatment or rejection.

Neglect

Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Procedure

1. Any sign of a mark or injury to a child when they come in to Frome Valley Preschool will be recorded, discussed with the parent / carer who will be asked to countersign the record. Parents/carers will be informed of this procedure on joining the setting.
2. The observed instances will recorded and any visible marks recorded on a body map.
3. If there appears to be any discrepancy or query regarding the injury or the injury is discovered after the parent/carer has left and the child discloses the names of the person causing the injury, this will be shared with CSC who may notify the police if there is any concern that the child is in danger of significant harm.

The Children Act of 1989 places a duty on CSC to investigate such matters. Frome Valley Preschool will follow the procedures set out by the Dorset Safeguarding Board(DSCB) and will take guidance of CSCon further action or procedures to be followed. All records will be kept confidential on a need to know basis.

Allegations of child abuse or neglect could lead to a criminal investigation so staff will not do anything to jeopardise this, for example, ask a child leading questions or attempt to investigate allegations themselves. If initial clarification is needed or if requested by CSC,staff will use open ended questions (T.E.D. tell me, explain to me, describe to me) but will be mindful that CSC and Police are responsible for child protection matters.

Whistle Blowing

All staff and volunteers are made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist about the management of safeguarding, which may include actions of colleagues. Any such concerns should be raised with the DSL. If the concern is about that person then the head teacher or the chairman of the governors should be informed.

Allegations against a member of staff or volunteer

Action will be taken under this heading if a concern is raised or allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer which suggests that a child has been harmed or is vulnerable to abuse.

Procedure

1. This should also be notified to the DSL/Employer who will contact Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)for advice and direction of procedures to follow.
2. Ofsted will then be notified of the allegation.
3. In all cases a record of the report, which is timed, dated and includes a clear name or signature will be made.
4. Suspension may be considered necessary if:
* there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or
* the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or
* the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal (as per Contracts of Employment or disciplinary procedures and grounds for gross misconduct)

The suspended person will be suspended on full pay during the period of the investigation. If there is no proof of any misconduct and a suspended person is to return to work, appropriate support should be set up e.g. mentor/management of contact with child/children/parents that made the allegation. If the complaint is upheld the staff member would be dismissed on the grounds of gross misconduct following usual disciplinary procedures

Full DSCB guidance and procedures on Managing Allegations is found in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2015.