**Safeguarding Children Policy**

Safeguarding children is provided by the Children and Young People’s Services Department, which supplies support for families whose children are in need of safeguarding to promote their welfare and upbringing.

All staff members should be aware of the possible indications of abuse or neglect and of the procedure for dealing with suspected cases.

**Referrals of child abuse**

1. **If a child arrives with injuries the staff should:**
   * Ensure immediate medical attention, if necessary.
   * If possible ask the parent/carer how the injuries occurred.
   * Explanations, however puzzling, should be accepted and accusations should not be made. Make a written record, including diagrams, of observations and explanations given. Have a witness wherever possible. This recording of information is to ensure that reasonably full and clear information is obtained in order to be able to make an appropriate referral to the Children and Young People’s Services Department if necessary.
   * If you suspect that the injuries have been caused by assault or by failure to protect the child you must report it immediately following the chain of command depending who is working at the time (Deputy Co-ordinator/ Co-ordinator/ Deputy Manager/Manager). That person will contact, without delay, the Duty Social Worker in the Children and Young People’s Service Office for the district in which the child resides or the Emergency Duty Team out of office hours.
2. **Suspicion of Abuse**

If through conversation or other contact with the child you have cause to suspect physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of a child in your care:

* Listen to what the child says. Be comforting and sympathetic. Ensure that the child feels as little responsibility as possible.
* It is particularly important not to make suggestions to the child regarding how the incident may have happened, therefore do not question the child except to clarify what he/she is saying.
* Write down exactly what the child says, or what actions concern you, and what you have said in response. Sign and date it.
* If an allegation concerns a member of staff, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the safety of the child and other children.
* Inform the manager/deputy manager of your suspicions and that person will contact without delay the **Duty Social Worker in the Children and Young People’s Services. Office Tel: 01572 758407** during office hours or the **Emergency Duty Team: 0116 – 2551606** if out of office hours. The manager/deputy should also contact **Ofsted: 0300 123 3153** who will offer advice and support to you wherever possible, although they will not be responsible for conducting enquiries into the allegations/suspicion. If the allegation concerns the manager any member of staff can contact the duty social worker and Ofsted.
* Once a child is referred to Children and Young People’s Services they and the Local Safeguarding Board will make an assessment of the child’s needs.

In the event of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff The Ark will suspend that person and inform Children and Young People’s Services and Ofsted. In the case of a member of staff the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) responsible with dealing with cases of abuse will be contacted for advice. The recording and reporting mechanism will be carried out regardless of whether the perpetrator is a member of staff, parent or any other adult who cares for the child.

* Members of staff will be supported
* The Ark Association will bring in disciplinary procedure
* Provide a member of staff to act as support person
* The Ark Association will support and work with the family and the child
* Support for colleagues

**If a partner/relation of a member of staff is being investigated for child abuse** and living with them, the staff member **must inform the manager or senior member of staff immediately.**

**The nursery will:**

* Support the staff member and their child/ran
* Confidentiality to be upheld always
* Contact the LADO at Rutland County Council
* Safeguarding supervision to be conducted with staff and manager

**The nursery has duty of care therefore the manager will:**

* Assess the impact of the investigation on the member of staff’s well-being
* The impact on their work practice
* After discussion with the member of staff decide whether time off is required

**If the partner/relation is found guilty of a childcare offense and is ‘disqualified’ then the member of staff becomes ‘disqualified’ too if they live within the same household.**

**Subsequent Action**

Following such a referral, enquires will be undertaken by Children and Young People’s Services and possibly the police. Staff may be required to provide statements and attend an Initial Child Safeguarding Conference.

The Ark will inform parents/carers when referring our suspicion of abuse to Children’s services. Please note it is our duty to refer child abuse whether parents give their consent or not.

**Confidentiality**

The Ark has the right to share any information regarding child safeguarding with other childcare professionals. All information will be kept confidential.

**Nappy Changing**

When changing a child’s nappy in an area where the door can shut fully, the door must be kept ajar throughout the routine.

**Use of Smart Watches**

As a general, a smartwatch is a wearable computing device which amongst other things, allows you to read text messages, emails and on some models even capture photographs or record voices. Therefore, staff at The Ark must ensure that any smartwatches worn must have all notifications and alarms turned off at all times during work hours. There should be no need for staff to be accessing or checking texts or emails on their smartwatches whilst working with the children in our care and any member of staff seen doing this will undergo disciplinary procedures.

**Service Personnel**

Due to our location near a number of Barracks, we gain children whose families work within the armed forces. Our practitioners know our Prevent policy and because of this will follow the correct procedures if they hear or become suspicious of any language or behaviour they may witness from a child, parent or carer. This can include the service personnel talking in a sympathetic manner towards a regime showing signs that they may have been radicalised during a deployment. In these cases the nursery would contact our LADO on 01572 720913.

**Signed………………………………………………… Date…………………………………………….**