



**St Thomas's Church Hall, 75 Monsell Road, London, N4 2EF**

0207 354 9347

playgroupleader@stthomasplaygroup.co.uk

## **Safeguarding Policy**

The designated members of staff to deal with child protection are:

Claudine Noury

Lynda Patching

### **The aims of this policy are:**

- To promote joint working with parents in the interests of children's welfare and wellbeing.
- To promote joint working with other agencies like, Health and Social Services, in the interests of children's welfare and wellbeing.
- To support all staff in bringing concerns to the attention of the Designated Child Protection Officer, so that they can be considered and acted upon if necessary.
- To ensure that the school plays an active part in ensuring that children are protected from any harm.

### **1. Our Commitment**

- Safeguarding children is a duty for everyone
- We work with parents, carers and other agencies to promote children's welfare and wellbeing.
- Concerns are always discussed with parents and carers unless this would put a child at further risk of serious harm.
- Every member of staff is obliged to report any evidence or suspicion of abuse.
- The needs of the child always come first
- Be sensitive, we recognise that families are different
- To report suspicion of sexual abuse - please contact Claudine or Lynda( see above) urgently - if unobtainable then seek the advice of Children's Social Care urgently and explain that you need their help and support

## The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

## The possible signs of abuse/neglect include:

- Information given by the child/young person
- Information reported by a concerned adult
- Changes in the child's/young person's behaviour. For example, the child/young person suddenly becomes quiet, tearful, withdrawn or aggressive
- Loss of weight without a medical explanation
- Eating problems, for instance, overeating or loss of appetite

**Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve forms of bullying (including cyber bullying among older children), causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of

maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

This could involve constant criticism, name-calling, ridicule, sarcasm, bullying, or unrealistic expectations of parents/carers over what a child/young person can achieve.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Statement on domestic violence**

Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members<sup>1</sup> regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

### **Controlling behaviour is:**

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

### **Coercive behaviour is:**

An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

The Government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence. As such the extension does not represent a fundamental change in the definition. However it does highlight the importance of recognising coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship.

Children of all ages living with a parent, most often the mother, who is experiencing domestic violence, are vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and / or neglect.

The legal definition of significant harm includes *"the harm that children suffer by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, particularly in the home."*

### **Statement on spirit possession or witchcraft**

Spirit possession is when parents, families and the child believe that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling them; the belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others.

A child may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labeled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child.

Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child involved.

Professionals should consult with their designated safeguarding children professional and make a referral to Children's Social Care, 020-7527- 7400.

For supplementary guidance please refer to the government's 20

*Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession:*

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFES-00465-2007.pdf>

### **Statement on female genital mutilation (FGM)**

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as:

"all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons"

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for whom FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse.

Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure. Any information or concern that a child is at immediate risk of, or has undergone, FGM should result in a child protection referral to Islington's Children's Social Care, 020-7527 - 7400.

For supplementary guidance please refer to the London Safeguarding Children Board *Safeguarding Children at Risk of Abuse through Female Genital Mutilation (2007)*:

[http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary\\_procedures/](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/supplementary_procedures/)

## 2. Procedures

- Where there is a concern about a child's welfare or wellbeing, or a concern that a child is in need of protection, then this should be recorded on the proforma and this should be passed to one of the designated officers for action. These running records should be kept separately to the child's admission form and stored in a locked cupboard.
- All staff and volunteers are aware that they **MUST** report concerns immediately; this is covered in their induction.
- All concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially in the office in chronological order.
- Parents may request to see these records

### **SEE Appendix 2 FLOWCHART FOR HOW TO MAKE A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL**

#### **If a child makes a disclosure the following procedures must be followed:**

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse the following actions are to be taken:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the child / young person
- Listen carefully to what the child / young person tells you without interrupting, take what they are saying seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. Only ask open questions, for example 'what happened?' (not 'who did this?')
- Do not stop a child / young person who is freely recalling significant events. Allow them to continue at their own pace.

#### **In line with the child's age and stage of development also consider the following:**

- Acknowledge how difficult it might have been for them to share this with you
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Tell the child / young person that they are not to blame
- Never promise a child / young person that what they told you can be kept a secret.
- Explain to the child / young person that you have a responsibility for their safety and therefore have to tell somebody in authority. Let them know that there are others who can help them and that they are not alone
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

## 2. Ensure the safety of the child / young person

As soon as possible take care to record in writing what was said using the child's own words. Record the date, time, setting, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and other people present.

- Sign and date the record
- Record any subsequent events and actions

It is not our responsibility to judge whether a child has been abused. Any disclosure must be raised with a designated person for child protection and followed through appropriately

A child may recall former abuse once in a safe situation. Although they may be under no current threat to their safety, any disclosure must be raised with the Named Child Protection Person and followed through appropriately.

You may also have concerns about a child's welfare where there has not been any disclosure or allegation. In the best interests of the child / young person, these concerns should be raised with the Named Child Protection Person and followed through appropriately.

**[SEE Appendix 2 FLOWCHART FOR HOW TO MAKE A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL](#)**

### **Working in partnership with parents / carers**

- We are committed to develop and maintain a culture of openness and honesty and to work in partnership with parents to ensure the best interest of children and their families.
- When a practitioner identifies a concern, this is discussed with the parent / carer and parents are informed if a referral to Children's Social Care is to be made unless this would put a child at further risk of serious harm.
- It is useful to talk the concern through with a senior member of the team and to agree who will be best placed to meet the parent/carer and what exactly will be said.

### 3. **Links with other policies and procedures**

- All staff, students, supply staff, crèche workers and volunteers are given basic information about our child protection policy before they start any work with children.
- High quality practice are an essential part of this work. Helping children feel settled, confident and safe in nursery plays an important part in making in helping them feel safe enough to disclose . **See Settling in Policy**.
- Appropriate understanding of developing close relationships with children, managing intimate care (focused on key person work), offering cuddles and reassurance when sought by children, respecting children's emotions and communication are all important aspects of induction, ongoing training and development, and the management of everyone who works at Kate Greenaway. See Key Person Policy, Behaviour Policy and Induction Pack for new staff.
- Appropriate understanding of helping children with toileting, and responding to play fighting and rough and tumble play.
- This links to our use of ICT which covers the use of mobiles and cameras by staff See E-Safety policy

## SEE APPENDIX 1 MOBILE PHONE AND CAMERA POLICY

- The policy also links with the E-safety Policy
- This policy links with the Safer Recruitment Policy

### 4. Who needs to know?

- Where there are significant issues around a child's welfare, wellbeing or protection, these must be passed onto the designated child protection officers.
- . It is important t a staff member, doesn't keep any such matters confidential or just between you and a parent/carer.
- When there has been an incident or a disclosure, this should be shared with the designated officers
- After assessing referrals and information, there will often be feedback to the team or to the whole staff, so that everyone can be updated and involved on aneed to know basis.
- Please be aware of and adhere to the confidentiality policy.

It is important that parents and carers using St Thomas playgroup do not experience having lots of private and sensitive information passed around.

- (This is in section 2)

### 5. Involving Childrens Services, working with Mums, Dads and Carers;

- If you are concerned about a child, you should discuss with the designated officer when and how this will be shared with a parent or Carer. Always keep a record of conversations including date and time.
- Make sure that you have agreed who will meet the parent/carer and what exactly will be said. Focus only on what you have seen. Don't speculate or use words that are unclear or imply anything. .
- Ask the parent/carer about your concern in a straightforward and non-judgmental way e.g. "that's quite a nasty bump on his head, do you mind telling me how it happened?"
- If necessary remind the parent of our duty to ask this type of question. .
- Show that you are actively listening to their account.
- Parents may appear nervous, because it is stressful to be questioned like this. Consider with a designated officer if an explanation seems reasonable and is it consistent with what you have noticed. Make a note of exactly what was said as soon as possible.
- After the meeting - decide with a designated safeguarding officer whether you feel the issue is resolved or needs further action.
- If you judge that it needs further action then Children's Social Care will need to be informed and they will advise on next steps. .
- In cases of **suspected sexual abuse** and cases where a child could **be in immediate danger if taken home by their parents/carers**, Children's Social Care are always contacted first, not the parents. They will advise on next steps of action.

### 7. Children harming other children

- It is part of our duty of care that we make sure that children are protected from harm from other children.
- In a playgroup with children under 5, biting, pushing, scratching and hitting will all occur, they are part of a normal range of behavior among young children.
- Please refer to the Behaviour Policy for managing these incidents. It is very important that if a child is persistently aggressive or harming to other children, raise this issue with the manager or person deputising immediately.
- In recording and reporting incidents it is important that the identity of the child who did the hurting is not disclosed to the parents or Carers of other children involved in the incident
- This is part of our duty of confidentiality to all children and families. If a parent asks who has hurt their child, please show your understanding of their upset, anger, or pain, but explain that we are not able to share this information.
- Refer to the Head teacher if necessary.

## **8. Promoting high standards of professional conduct, and dealing with allegations against a member of staff**

- All staff recruited to St Thomas' playgroup are recruited in line with the safer recruiting guidelines.
- DBS checks are carried out on all staff and student placements and volunteers.
- St Thomas playgroup asks to see the DBS disclosure of any member of staff on supply. Work experience students and volunteers will also have a DBS check. a
- Temporary staff members, volunteers and students are asked to follow all the guidelines and procedures carefully and should never be the sole company of children into toilets or other private/out-of-sight areas in St Thomas playgroup .
- All of the above complete the induction process and sign to agree that they have understood our policies, procedures including basic safeguarding practices.
- Staff must not carry a child/children in their car.
- Staff should always take care to behave sensitively towards all children and avoid behaviour which could harm or upset any child.
- In rare circumstances, an allegation may be brought against a member of staff by a parent, a child or another member of staff.
- It is important for everyone concerned that this difficult event is handled with care and appropriate speed.
- **SEE Appendix 3 THE FLOW CHART ON ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF.**
- An allegation may be anything from a formal allegation in person or in writing, to an off-hand remark in the setting. Any comment or statement which suggests that a member of staff has behaved improperly or abusively towards a child must be considered as an allegation. There are two reasons for this:

The playgroup has an overarching duty to protect children from abuse and keep children safe. Wanting to support a colleague or finding it difficult to believe what you have heard or seen must come second to that.

For the member of staff, it is important that the issue is handled quickly and professionally. It is impossible to do your job if there are suspicions or rumours in the air, however ill-founded.

In all cases, even when the allegation does not need further investigation, there should be a review of procedures and policies following the investigation.

If the senior member of staff and the LADO agree that the allegation is unsubstantiated, then the member of staff should be told clearly that this is the case, and all other members of staff in the school.

In all cases, Children's Social Care, Islington Early Years and Ofsted must **all** be notified of the allegation and the actions taken.

### **Positive Behaviour Policy**

*Please check the playgroup's behaviour policy to remind yourself of how you may and may not manage children's behaviour. Remember that:*

- Using the practice "Time out" is only used with the agreement of parents/carers and with a specific plan in place. When necessary and in very rare cases, we operate a system of 'time out' that is developmentally appropriate for very young children in which children are not left 'alone' by practitioners (see Behavior Policy)
- You may occasionally have to tell a child to move away from an activity or another group of children to calm a situation down. If this is happening regularly (e.g. more than twice a week) then you need to involve parents/carers and the SENCO for planning.
- Restraint must only be used if there is immediate danger of the child, or another child/adult, being harmed.
- It is never acceptable to hit, smack, shake, pull a child or to threaten any of these actions to child . It is also not acceptable for a parent/carer or any other adult to do this in the school (please seek support from senior staff members if this happens).

### **Final principles**

- If in doubt - share your concerns - don't feel that you will look foolish, or that the person you want to talk to is too busy. Child protection must come first, regardless of meetings, visitors etc.
- Make a record - what you saw, what the child said, what the parents said. How did the child appear? How did the parents react?
- Involve parents appropriately - take advice.
- Be sensitive about different styles of parenting.
- This does not mean ignoring your concerns. Withdrawn, unwell, shut-down, injured children need intervention to promote their wellbeing.
- Act quickly - arrange meetings with parents sooner rather than later (but not before you are prepared or had time to think)
- The child's welfare and safety always come first

## **Appendix 1: Mobile Phones and Cameras**

### Policy for the use of mobile phones and digital cameras in nursery

#### **Mobile phones:**

Under no circumstances are mobile phones to be used or kept with a member of staff. They are to be kept in our safe during playgroup hours and signed in and out each day.

Any member of staff found with a mobile phone in their possession or in the room where they are working will face disciplinary action.

Any student found with a mobile phone in their possession whilst working in the nursery room will have their placement terminated.

Any member of staff waiting for a personal call is to use the land line number or the mobile is to be left in the office.

**Staff do** take mobile phones out with them on educational trips and visits for safety reasons.

Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones for personal reasons whilst out of the nursery on an outing.

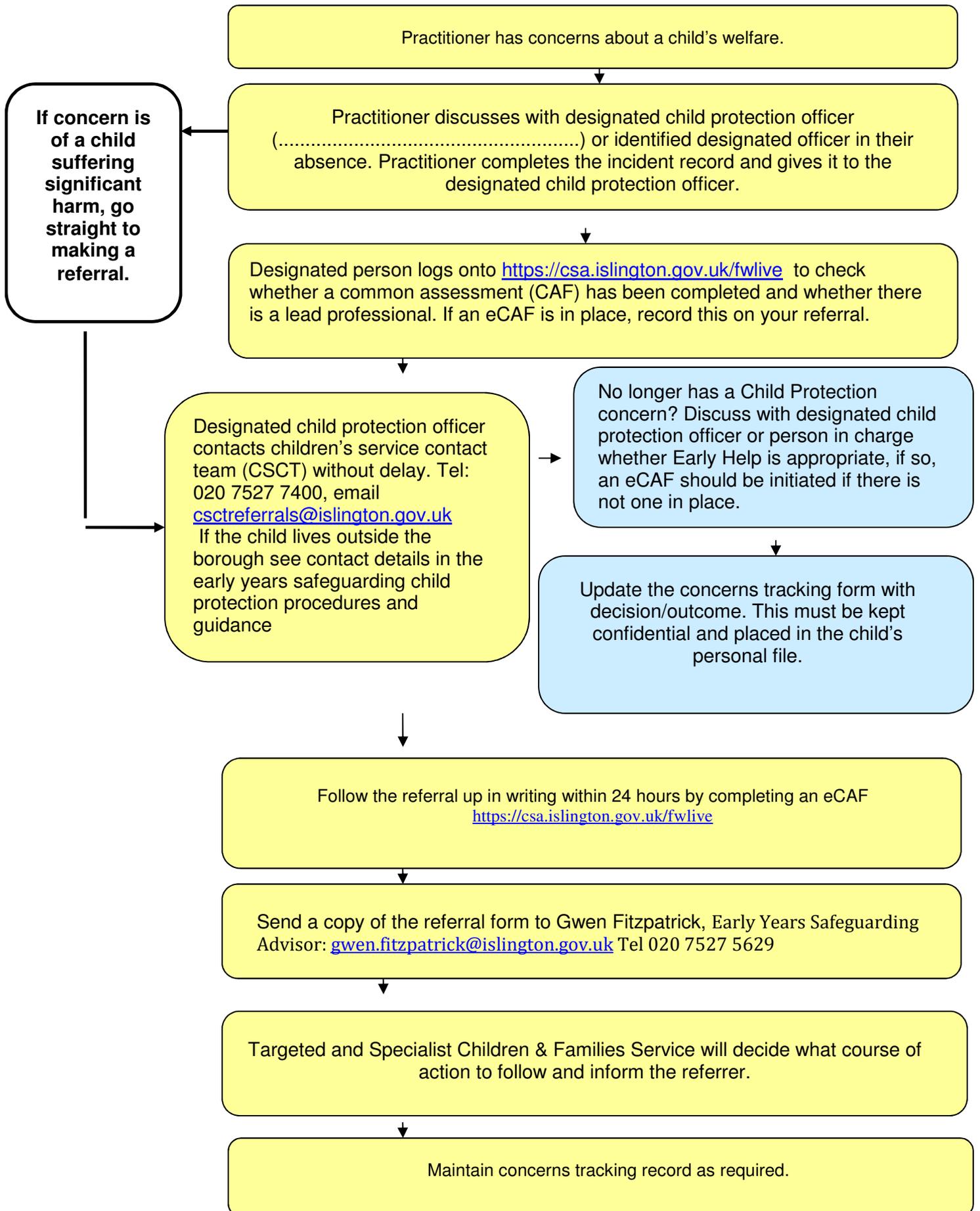
Any visitors to the playgroup are requested not to use their phones whilst in the nursery room. By signing into the visitors book all visitors automatically agree to the policy on Mobile Phones and Cameras. - It is up to staff in the room to reinforce this policy and inform parents/visitors that calls are to be made outside the nursery. Any parent who does not conform to this will be reminded of the policy and may be asked to leave the nursery.

#### **Digital Cameras and Ipads:**

Staff cameras from home are not allowed in the nursery rooms. Any person wishing to take photographs of the children for displays or observations is to use the nursery digital cameras and Ipads only. Any member of staff using a personal camera (not a nursery one) will face disciplinary action.

Special Events and parents.

At special events we will always announce that we are happy for parents to take photographs of their own children and request that everyone is sensible about the use of digital photographs.



### Appendix 3 see below Flowchart for allegations made against a member of staff

If an allegation is made that a member of staff has harmed a child or is alleged to have behaved in a way in their private life that may suggest they are unsuitable to work with children and young people, the designated child protection officer, **Claudine Noury**, or in their absence deputy designated child protection officer, be informed immediately. If the allegation concerns the manager/designated child protection officer, the management committee/proprietor must be informed.

To assess the most appropriate course of action, the following initial information must be collated:

- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure,
- the exact words spoken by the child/staff/member/parent/volunteer as far as possible,
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported ( with date and time),
- the names of any other person present at the time,
- wider relevant knowledge or background information.

**(Note: it is not appropriate at this stage to conduct formal interviews or take written statements from staff, as this could compromise a later Children's Social Care or police investigation)**

The Local Authority designated officer (LADO) **must be informed within one working day** on Tel: 020 7527 8102. The LADO will clarify if and how the matter will be taken forward and what appropriate course of action should be taken. In serious situations, the LADO will advise whether a suspension should take place immediately.

After discussing the situation with the LADO, it may become clear that a referral to Children's Services Contact Team is required.

After discussing the situation with the LADO, it may become clear that a referral to Children's Social Care is **not** required and the nursery is to follow their own complaints and disciplinary procedures.

Refer the allegation to Children's services Contact Team: 020 7527 7400 email [csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk](mailto:csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk) and follow this up in writing within 24 hours by completing the eCAF referral <https://csa.islington.gov.uk/fwlive/>

The incident should be documented and a clear and honest explanation given to the child's parent/carer. Ofsted and Gwen Fitzpatrick, Early Years Safeguarding Advisor 0207 527 5629 must be informed of this outcome in writing.

Children's Social care will contact the nursery as to how to proceed. A formal strategy meeting will take place between Children's Social Care, the nursery representative and the police (as appropriate). This meeting will agree what action is required immediately to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, and/or provide interim services and support.

Ofsted must be informed (0300 123 1231) of any allegation concerns made against a member of staff. Complete the safeguarding and child protection concerns form and send this to Ofsted: fax 08456 40 40 49 or email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk). A copy of this form can be found in the Islington Early Years Safeguarding and Child protection Procedures and Guidance and can be downloaded from the early year's section of the Islington website.

Once the investigation is complete, Ofsted may visit to discuss the implications of the investigation. It may be necessary to implement the setting's disciplinary, grievance or complaints procedure.

**DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service must be informed if a staff member has been dismissed as a result of the allegation**