

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy's Statement of Intent

Mallusk Community Playgroup is committed to creating a safe environment for children which is free from abuse and where any suspicion of abuse is dealt with promptly and appropriately. The welfare of all children is paramount. We will comply with Health and Social Services Guidelines on Child Protection and will appoint designated persons to deal with Child Protection issues in the early years setting (refer to Flow Chart on dealing with concerns of a child's welfare).

Procedures

In accordance with the Trust Guidelines, we will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Excluding known abusers

To achieve this we will ensure:

- Pre-employment interviews and 2 written references are taken up for all adults prior to employment takes place.
- Social services check and Access NI check completed.
- New staff are employed in line with Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996.
- All appointments will be subject to satisfactory vetting procedures by Social Services and Access NI.
- All appointments will be subject to a probationary period, which should be reviewed within 6 months of taking up posts.

Preventing abuse by means of good practice

To achieve this we will ensure:

- That the staff code of conduct is adhered to by all staff/volunteers.
- That staff and volunteers receive clear instructions on tasks and limits, which apply to them, as newcomers during the induction process.
- All staff/volunteers attend training and regular update of training on:
 - Child Protection;
 - How to recognise the signs of abuse;
 - What action to take;
 - How to protect children and self.
- Appropriate adult/child ratios will always be maintained and adults will not be left alone for extended periods of time with individual children or small groups.
- The layout of the room will permit constant supervision of all children.
- Appropriate activities to develop children's self-esteem with regard to self-protection will be provided.

Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse

We will do this by:

- Using appropriate strategies to support children who may make a disclosure of abuse e.g. puppets, drawings, comfort, books.
- Observing children on an ongoing basis and noting any significant changes in behaviour that may give cause for concern.
- Keeping appropriate records (refer to 'Recording of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse') in accordance with confidentiality guidelines and the Data Protection Act.
- By keeping records until child's 21st birthday due to possibility of legal action.

Sharing Information

We will do this by:

- Sharing concerns only with those agencies who need to know.
- Involving parents and children appropriately.

Supporting Staff

Dealing with and reporting abuse can be a distressing experience for staff and volunteers. It is important that staff/volunteers are supported through this experience. Help will be given via The Early Years Organisation and Social Services, with the help of the playgroup leader and committee.

Procedures for Reporting of Abuse

Staff member or volunteer will inform the playgroup leader or other assigned Child Protection Personnel who in turn will follow the procedure as set out in 'Dealing with concerns of a child's welfare'.

Recording of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in your organisation has concerns, a record will be made on the '**Report of Child Protection Issue Form**' in the Child Protection File.

If you do any of the following, make a note of this on the back of the form:

- ✓ Has the child been spoken to and if so what was said?
- ✓ Have the parents been contacted, if so, what was said?
- ✓ Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- ✓ Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

Body Map

A Child Protection Body Map is used to record information about physical injuries to a child, particularly if we feel that the injury is non-accidental or thought to be following a pattern. The Body Map provides a visual record of physical abuse and will help other professionals when deciding if there is a concern. The Body Map is simply a record of what can be seen and what has been said about the injury.

The Body Map (filed in Child Protection Folder in filing cabinet) should be used to record any physical injuries. *WHEN RECORDING INJURIES, NEVER PHOTOGRAPH THE CHILD.*

