# Safeguarding Policy 2023

**Working Together to Safeguard Children**

To access safeguarding children general procedures

[**http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk**](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk)

**Designated Person (staff) who co-ordinates safeguarding is:**

Liz Radford

**Designated Person (committee) who oversees this work is:** Committee Chair

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

* Protecting children from maltreatment
* Preventing the impairment of children’s health or development
* Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
* Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document ‘Working together to safeguard children March 2015’)*

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children’s health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single child protection policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with other policies and procedures.

Haxby Playgroup will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

* Introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our curriculum promoting 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
* Create a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, language spoken at home, cultural and social background.
* Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Haxby Playgroup has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of Liz Radford or Committee Chair at the earliest opportunity.

The Local Authority has designated officers (**LADOs**) to:

* Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
* Liaise with the police and other agencies
* Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

Contact

01904 551783

Staff have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children; they will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. Haxby Playgroup has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocation.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after (factitious illness by proxy).

### Recognising physical abuse

Bruising is a concern when bruises:

* can be seen on parts of the body not normally harmed through play  
  appear in or around the mouth (especially in young babies)  
  appear as small 'grasp' or finger marks to a child's arms or legs  
  look like they have been caused by a stick or belt  
  appear to be of different ages (colour) in the same area  
  appear the same on both sides of the body, legs, head or arms  
  appear as bite marks especially when the marks appear to be those of an adult or older child (more than 3cm across)  
  are seen in a baby which is not mobile

Most fractures are treated by a hospital. It is concerning when a child is not taken for treatment if they are suffering pain, swelling or discoloration over a bone or joint. Although it may not always be possible to know whether a child has a fractured bone it is difficult for a parent or carer to be unaware that the child has been hurt. It is rare for children under the age of one to sustain a fracture accidentally.

It can be difficult to distinguish between a burn or scald that has been caused accidentally or non-accidentally. As with fractures all burns and scalds should receive medical treatment.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is when a child is deprived of love, warmth and affection or is persistently treated negatively, inconsistently, inappropriately or is rejected. This may include the child being constantly told that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate or the parent or carer having unreasonable and unrealistic expectations of the child's abilities or making the child being made to feel frightened or in danger.

### Recognising emotional abuse

Signs of emotional abuse include:

* very low self-esteem, often with an inability to accept praise or trust in adults
* excessive clinging and attention seeking behaviour
* over anxious - being excessively 'watchful', constantly checking or being over anxious to please
* withdrawn and socially isolated

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual activities may involve physical contact such as sexual intercourse, buggery or non-penetrative acts.

Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities like involving children in looking at pornography, creating pornography, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### Recognising sexual abuse

Signs of sexual abused include:

* sexually explicit talk or play, especially in prepubescent children
* sexual behaviour, such as pretending to have sex during play
* sexually provocative relationships with adults
* itching, redness, soreness or unexplained bleeding from a child's vagina or anus
* bruising, cuts or marks to the genital area
* repeated genital infections

Neglect

Neglect is when there is a constant failure to meet the child's basic physical or psychological needs in a way that is likely to cause serious damage to the child's health or development. Neglect can include failing to provide a child with adequate food, shelter or clothing or failing to protect a child from harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### Recognising neglect

Signs of neglect include:

* the child frequently appearing hungry
* the child consistently appearing unkempt or inappropriately dressed for the weather or smelling
* failure to seek medical attention
* failure to prevent accidental injury

Key Commitment 1:

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

* Haxby Playgroup aims to ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
* All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse, and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding concerns are reported appropriately.
* The Designated Safeguarding Person will undertake specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.
* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of 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 lists 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 the children.
* Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
* Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
* the criminal records disclosure reference number;
* the date the disclosure was obtained; and
* details of who obtained it.
* All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
* All staff and volunteers are required to notify us if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, court orders, reprimands and warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision (see above questions), or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
* We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led 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 that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development, our planning or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.
* Any personal information is held securely and in line with data protection requirements and guidance from the ICO
* The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate e-safety 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 support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
* The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to the children’s social worker services, the LADO, Ofsted or Riddor.

*Key commitment 2*

Haxby Playgroup 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’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015).

*Responding to suspicions of abuse*

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* 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 their general well-being;
* their comments which 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 neglect or abuse outside the setting.
* We consider factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent’s drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent’s learning disability.
* We aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation; that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
* We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may meet.
* Where we believe that 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 concerns and follow the LSCB procedures.
* Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
* If a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures and can refer to MASH themselves.
* We refer concerns to the local authority children’s social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police, or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
* We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
* We take account of 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 is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be considered, 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 where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
* We have a whistle blowing policy in place.

*Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

* Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
* listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
* does not question the child;
* makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the 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 names of any other person present at the time.
* These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
* The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and within 1 working day.
* Where the Local Safeguarding Children Board stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

*What You Should Do If You Suspect Abuse*

* You must report concerns as soon as possible to the **Designated Child Protection Persons: Liz Radford or Committee Chair.** If it is an emergency and the designated persons cannot be contacted, then social services or the police should be contacted (refer to contact numbers sheet at bottom of policy).
* Suspicions must remain confidential and not be discussed with anyone other than those named above. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. We would hope that an individual would use this procedure. However, if you feel that the organisation has not responded appropriately to your concerns it is open to you to contact the child protection agencies direct.

*Unclear Situations*

* If it is unclear whether a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, discussions should be made with the Designated Child Protection Person or of they are unavailable the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 01904 551900 or 0845 0349417 outside office hours The Emergency

*Making a Referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Team*

* We display a copy of the City of York Safeguarding Children Board referral route map that sets down the procedures to be followed if you are concerned about a child.
* We also have available The City of York Safeguarding Children Board form to report Child Protection Concerns.
* All referrals from professionals should be confirmed in writing by the referrer **within 48 hours.**

*Escalation Process*

* If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly 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.

*Informing Parents*

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child in greater danger.
* 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 while the referral will be made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.
* If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk the designated person should seek advice from children’s social work services, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

*Liaison with other agencies*

* We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* The current version of 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
* We will 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 allegations being made.
* The contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is 0808 800 5000.

*Allegations against Staff*

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
* inappropriate sexual comments;
* excessive physical force
* excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
* We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
* We ensure that all staff or volunteer know how to raise concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within the setting. We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with my/our response.
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident and then contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to investigate.
* We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely 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 in the circumstances, 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.

*Disciplinary Action*

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused 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*

*We* are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering young children, through [our/my] 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 and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
* Designated persons receive training in accordance with that recommended by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
* We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.

*Planning*

* The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

*Curriculum*

* 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 way that is developmentally appropriate 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

*Support to families*

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
* We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising always with the local children’s social care team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, after any investigation.
* Confidential records kept on a child are 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board.

**Legal Framework**

***Primary legislation***

* Children Act (1989 s47)
* Protection of Children Act (1999)
* Data Protection Act (1998)
* The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
* Childcare Act 2006

***Secondary legislation***

* Sexual Offences Act (2003)
* Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
* Equalities Act (2010)
* Data Protection Act (1998) Non Statutory Guidance
* Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009
* Children and Families Act 2014
* Serious Crime Act 2015

**Further Guidance**

* Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
* What to do if you’re Worried a Child is Being Abused (DfE 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 2007)
* Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners providing Safeguarding Services (DfE 2015)
* Disclosure and Barring Service: [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check)
* Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)

LOCAL CONTACTS FOR SUPPORT

Important contacts in child protection and related fields include:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Phone** | **Times** | **Area of Work** |
| Liz Radford/  Designated member of staff | Playgroup  01904 762776  01904 768966 | Playgroup opening hours | Designated Child Protection Person |
| Committee Chair | Playgroup  01904 762776(RB)  01904 768966 | Playgroup opening hours | Committee Designated Person |
| OFSTED | 03001231231 | Office hours | General Enquiries and Whistle blowing |
| OFSTED | 0300123466 | Office Hours |  |
| York Children's Social Care: MASH  Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): | 01904551900  08450349417 | Office hours | The Advice and Information worker sends the referral to the Service Manager or duty Referrals and Assessment Team Social Worker |
| North Yorkshire Police | 101 | 24 hours | Family Protection Unit |
| Survive | 0117 9612999 | Office hours | Support for women and children suffering domestic abuse |
| Childline | 0800 1111 | 24 hours | Listen to and counsel children and young people |
| 'Family Lives' | 0808 800 2222 | 8am-10pm | Listen to and counsel parents |