

Child Protection Policy in the kindergarten La petite academy Leila d.o.o.

Introduction

We appreciate proper balance between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/guardians and families, but where there is conflict the child's welfare must come first.

Children have a right to be heard, listened to and to be taken seriously. Children will be provided with a safe and secure learning environment. The employees will continuously receive training on 'keeping children safe'. It is vital that children feel respected and valued and that this is always demonstrated through interactions between children and staff, parents and staff, and amongst other children.

A safe and recognised method will be used to recruit new employees to the kindergarten and effective procedures for responding to accidents and complaints are in place. This includes ensuring clear procedures to provide specific guidance to staff who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of children who attend the kindergarten. Any accidents/incidents must be recorded and notified to the relevant parent.

Staff Recruitment

In engaging staff or volunteers the following procedures will be followed:

Permanent staff

- The normal recruitment practice will apply.
- Staff will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and code of behaviour and will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children.

Staff on short term contracts

- A clear job description is developed outlining the responsibilities of the job and the reporting procedure.
- The applicant must supply information of previous, recent experience, particularly all experience relating to working with children.
- The Criminal Records Bureau clearance will be sought for every successful applicant;
- Staff will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and code of behaviour and will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have read it and agree to abide by its contents and that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with children.

Training

All staff will be expected to participate in relevant training and must have received some training on the issue of child protection.

Where young people, under 18 years, are assisting in the work of the kindergarten, they will receive appropriate information on Child Protection Policy and national child protection policy at a level suitable to their age and experience. These young people will always work in partnership with or under the supervision of an adult.

Keeping Parents and Guardians Informed

It is our practice to inform parents/guardians first in the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse, unless this could put the child in danger.

Dealing with Challenging or Disruptive Behaviour

Staff will be given guidance and support in dealing with difficult behaviour. The kindergarten ensures that the safety and welfare of the children is a priority and that staff will deal sensitively and professionally with any difficult issues that may arise. Where instances of challenging or disruptive behaviour occur, a record will be kept of this where the instance requires the intervention of a worker or volunteer or where the safety and wellbeing of others are at risk.

Bullying

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others.

Examples of bullying include:

- Teasing
- Taunting
- Threatening
- Hitting
- Extortion
- Exclusion

La petite academy will not tolerate any bullying behaviour and will deal with any incidents immediately in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

We strive to ensure that the experience of children in our kindergarten is a happy and productive one. In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/volunteer involved. The following are guidelines to support the worker/volunteer in this:

- React calmly;
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the disclosure seriously;
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- Do not promise to keep anything secret;
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser;
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record;
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures which will follow;
- Pass the information to the Child Protection Officer, do not attempt to deal with the problem

alone;

- Treat the information confidentially.

Role of the Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child protection and welfare policy of the kindergarten La petite academy is promoted and implemented.

The role of the Child Protection Officer involves the following duties:

- To be familiar with national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children, the principles of good practice for the protection of children & young people and to have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the child protection and welfare policy of the kindergarten;
- To receive reports of alleged/suspected or actual child abuse and act on these in accordance with the guidelines;
- To ensure that training is provided for all new and existing staff on the child protection policy;
- To build a working relationship with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other agencies, as appropriate;
- To ensure that supports are put in place for the child, employees or volunteers in cases of allegations being made;
- To keep up to date and undertake relevant training on child protection policy and practice, in order to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of the kindergarten's policy and procedures in this area;
- To review the kindergarten's policy and procedures on child protection on an annual basis and amend as appropriate;
- To ensure that systems are in place for recording and retaining all relevant documentation in relation to child protection issues.

Child Protection Officer for kindergarten La petite academy

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Reporting Procedure in respect of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types:

- Neglect,
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past. This is an important responsibility for staff and volunteers when working with children.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting children abuse are summarised as follows: The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority. While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is outlined in the following steps:

- The employee or volunteer who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse should bring it to the attention of the Child Protection Officer immediately.
- The Child Protection Officer will assess and review the information that has been provided. The CPO may contact the HSE for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.
- After consultation with the HSE officials, the Child Protection Officer will then take one of two options:

Report the allegation, concern or disclosure or Not make a formal report but keep a record of the concerns on file. The reasons for not reporting the allegation, concern or disclosure will be clearly recorded. The employee/volunteer who made the initial report will be informed if a formal report is not being made to the HSE and it is open to him/her to make a formal report themselves, directly to the relevant authority if they feel this is necessary. Where a formal report is made the HSE will then liaise with Centre for Social Work. It is likely that the HSE will want to speak to the person who first made the report to clarify facts and the circumstances of the report.

Emergency Reports to Centre for Social Work

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in an un-safe situation.

Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Confidentiality

In matters of child abuse, an employee/volunteer should never promise to keep secret, any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the child that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know, will be told.

It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. The information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.

If an Allegation is made against a Staff Member

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee of the playschool, there are two procedures that the playschool will put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child;
- The procedure for dealing with the employee.

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of the playschool, the same person will not deal with both the child and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The Child Protection Officer will follow the normal reporting procedure of the playschool.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Child Protection Officer, the Manager will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure.

If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Manager, the Department of Health and Children will deal with all aspects relating to the Manager.

In the case of an allegation being made against a volunteer within the kindergarten, the Child Protection Officer will deal with the issue as outlined.

Complaints Procedure for Child Safety and Protection

Kindergarten La petite academy is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children with whom we work. The kindergarten has put in place a complaints procedure to cover any situations which may arise, when children or their parents/guardians are not happy with the way the children were treated by the kindergarten. Complaints regarding the safety and welfare of children should be directed to the Child Protection Officer.

Record Keeping

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for keeping the following records related to Child Protection in a locked filing cabinet. The Child Protection Officer, and the Manager are the only officers who have access to these records:

- Any complaints about the safety and welfare of children;
- Any disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse;
- The follow up to any complaints, disclosure, concerns or allegations, including informal advice from the HSE, reports to the HSE and informing parents/guardians;
- Any bullying complaints related to the playschools work and the follow up action;
- Signed acceptance forms of the Child Protection Policy by staff members, people on short term contracts, staff/volunteers from other agencies working in the kindergarten.