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| **POLICY** | **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN / CHILD PROTECTION** |
| **SETTING** | **OVERTON PLAYCENTRE** |
| **AIMS** | The aim of Overton Playcentre is to take seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of all the children in our care and to take the necessary steps should any concerns be raised, in accordance with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. (A copy of which can be found at the back of this policy.)We aim to provide a safe, respectful and supportive environment for children where they feel confident to approach adults secure in the knowledge they will be listened to. Every child has the right to social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.As Early Years providers we take seriously our responsibilities to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, found under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006Overton playcentre will ensure that:* We have clear safeguarding procedures are in place so that children using our services are protected from abuse or neglect.
* Our staff will complete safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.
* We have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who should liaise with local statutory children’s services agencies as appropriate. This lead must also complete child protection training.

We aim to raise the awareness of all staff and volunteers of their responsibility to identify and act on any suspected case of neglect or abuse and ensure they are aware of the procedures to follow. |
| **Objectives, Statements and Procedures** | **It is the duty of all persons to voice any concerns which may prevent continued or subsequent abuse of children.**At Overton Playcentre we adhere to the statement above and understand that the child’s welfare is paramount and take seriously the necessity to protect children from harm. At the Playcentre the designated officer for all concerns to be voiced to is Margaret Davies (Playcentre Manager) who is nominated by the committee of Overton Playcentre to act on their behalf in referring allegations of suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the designated officer, or if the matter relates to the designated officer, the matter should be brought to the attention of the co-registered person, Chair of the committee. In an emergency where the designated officer or chair person cannot be contacted you must contact Flintshire and Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board (FWLSCB) duty social worker on 01978 292039 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm or for all other hours, the emergency duty team on 0845 0533116. They can also be contacted via email: cafat@wrexham.gov.uk or emergency.hours@wrexham.gov.uk.Every individual has a responsibility to inform the designated officer of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The designated officer will decide whether the concerns should be communicated to FWLSCB or the police.We will respond appropriately and swiftly to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and provide parents/carers, children, staff and volunteers with the opportunity to openly voice their concerns safe in the knowledge that they will be treated fairly and with respect.We will have a systematic approach to dealing with concerns and take guidance from FWLSCB and Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) and other statutory childcare authorities. We adhere to the strict guidelines set out in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008.**Responsibilities of the Designated Officer (Manager)**The welfare of the child is paramount and will always be the priority of the designated officer. The role includes:* Referring a child to FWLSCB if there are any concerns. Where a referral has been made by telephone to the local authority children and family assessment team (CAFAT) it will be followed up in writing within 48 hours. When implemented the CAF (common assessment framework) will provide the structure for the written referral.
* Have a clear understanding of the CAF and be trained in how to use it.
* Liaising with other agencies and services where appropriate.
* Talking to parents/carers about concerns where appropriate.
* Ensuring all staff are aware of the Safeguarding policy and have up to date training.
* Keeping and storing records.

Overton Playcentre recognises that many children and young people today are victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The definitions of abuse can be found at the end of this document in the All Wales Child Protection Procedure 2008.**Staff Roles**The safety and well-being of all children and families is of paramount importance at Overton Playcentre.* All staff, volunteers, committee members and trustees will have the relevant CRB checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. All known abusers will be excluded. All posts involved will be exempt from the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975)
* All staff are made aware that they are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and will work in an open and transparent way, avoiding any conduct which would lead to questions regarding their motivations and intentions.
* Staff are made aware that their first responsibility is to the child. This is achieved through the recruitment process, staff handbook, ongoing training and appraisals.
* All children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment e.g. smacking is unlawful in all settings. Staff will not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm or demeaning comments towards children is not acceptable in any situation. (See Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy)
* Overton Playcentre will ensure that all staff will complete a basic awareness course of safeguarding children. The Designated officer will complete more detailed training. All details of staff training will be kept in accordance to our recording information policy.
* Staff will be trained in how to keep records and what to do about concerns about possible neglect or abuse.
* General information sharing, non specific to a particular child, is encouraged including informing new staff members of correct procedures.
* Only staff with a current CRB certificate will assist children with toileting, changing nappies/soiled clothing or dealing with for example playground injuries.
* Only the manager or in her absence the most senior staff member will be responsible for administering medicines. (See administration of Medicines Policy)
* Only staff with a current CRB certificate will be left alone with children to facilitate small group work or time out situations and then only for short periods when a door will be left ajar for the safety of the child and staff member.
* Child protection issues will be placed regularly on the staff meeting agenda.

**Accidents/Incidents/Illness*** Playcentre staff will inform parents/carers of any accidents or incidents that may occur during the session involving their child. The circumstances, any injury sustained and action taken will be recorded clearly and parents/carers will be asked to sign to acknowledge the information shared.
* In the case of a head injury, a head injury advice sheet will be given to the parent/carer whilst signing the incident/accident book. (Advice taken from NHS website.)
* In the case of a parent/carer not collecting a child at the end of a session where an incident/accident has occurred, the manager or in her absence deputy manager will contact the parent/carer by phone and inform them of the incident/accident.
* All parent/carers will be encouraged to inform staff of any accidents/incidents occurring outside of playgroup verbally at the start of the session or by telephone if the child is absent. Where a staff member should notice an injury/mark on a child upon arrival, a discreet inquiry will be made to ascertain the nature of how the injury/mark was acquired. A file note may be made and given to the manager.
* Parents/carers are encouraged to keep in regular contact via phone to provide updates if their child will not be attending their regular sessions due to illness.
* Any concerns by any staff or volunteers with regards to regular or prolonged absences due to illness/accidents will be voiced to the designated officer without delay.
* Information regarding a child’s history is sought via the registration form in the admissions process.

**Home time*** If a child is not collected at the end of a session we will follow the guidelines ass set out in our Lost or Uncollected Child Policy.
* If a parent/carer or nominated person arrives to collect a child whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol or incapacitated in such a way which would seriously restrict their ability to care for the child, contact will be made with another appropriate adult by phone from the details given on the registration form.
* In any of the above circumstances the child in question would not be called through for collection to avoid unnecessarily alarming or distressing the child.
* If the adult is unwilling to co-operate and the staff deem them unfit to care for the child; after trying all other methods to contact another appropriate adult from the contacts given on the registration form we would have no alternative than to contact CAFAT and/or the police on the numbers given at the start of this document.

**Responding to Allegations of Abuse****It is the responsibility of ALL individuals to voice their concerns to the designated officer without delay.****General*** All concerns will be treated confidentially and not discussed with anyone other than designated officer or in her absence the committee chair/co-registered person. In an emergency direct referral to CAFAT can be made.
* The designated officer will investigate all concerns, seek advice from and liaise with the safeguarding agencies.
* The designated officer will, where appropriate inform the co-registered person.
* Any child displaying significant changes in behaviour or appearance will be investigated appropriately, records will be kept and the designated officer will continue to monitor the child.
* Parents/carers will be the first point of contact if there is a concern about the child. However parental permission will be bypassed if it is felt that a child is at risk of significant harm and by talking the parent/carer it may be detrimental to the child’s well being and prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime. In this case further information would be sought from the appropriate agency. All information will be kept confidential and shared only a strict ‘need to know basis’.
* The designated named person has a responsibility to work collaboratively with Child and family assessment team, to ensure adequate protective measures are in place.

 **Child Disclosing*** If a child does disclose some information, the staff member/volunteer will remain calm and professional and reassure the child keeping in mind that the child’s wellbeing is paramount.
* All children will be listened to and any disclosure will be taken seriously.
* The child will be encouraged to talk but not be prompted or asked leading questions.
* All disclosures will be recorded accurately, giving precise details of what the child has said and what the adult has said to them. The exact words used will be recorded to prevent interpretation or misunderstanding. Details of the situation prior to the disclosure will also be recorded. Dates and times will be used and the notes will be kept secure in a locked cabinet.
* Do not dismiss any concerns, If you are mistaken you will always be listened to and taken seriously. It is always better to have discussed any concerns with someone who is experienced and has the responsibility to make an assessment.
* The designated officer will be informed as soon as possible. Consideration will be given whether it is safe for the child to return home. If it is deemed unsafe, the designated officer will contact CAFAT.
* Appropriate action will be taken by the designated officer who will seek advice from CAFAT.
* If a staff member/volunteer feels they need support after a child has disclosed something to them the designated officer will take time out to debrief with the staff member/volunteer and if necessary arrange contact with a professional for them to talk to.
* The child’s welfare throughout is paramount and the designated officer will make the decision with advice and support as to whether the child is at risk of significant harm. If it is felt that this is the case, the police will be informed. If, however, it is deemed that the child is not at risk of significant harm the designated officer will discuss concerns with the parent/carer and then make the judgement whether to make a referral, depending on the outcome of the conversation.

**Allegations of Physical Injury, emotional abuse or neglect.*** If a child has an injury which may be non-accidental, or shows signs or symptoms of neglect a referral may be made. Where appropriate the parent/carer will be the first port of call and they will be encouraged to seek assistance from CAFAT prior to a referral being made. Telephone referrals will always be confirmed in writing by the referrer using a completed CAF within 48 hours.
* The written referral should be acknowledged by CAFAT within 1 working day of receipt. If no contact has been made within 3 days the referrer will contact CAFAT again.
* If an injury is deliberate, the designated officer will contact CAFAT for advice before consulting the parent/carer.
* If emergency medical treatment is necessary, the designated officer will make immediate arrangements and accompany the child. She will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
* If medical attention is required but is non-urgent, the designated officer will liaise with and seek advice from CAFAT.

**Allegations of sexual abuse*** In this circumstance the designated officer will contact CAFAT and/ or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team immediately and will not speak to the parent/carer.
* The designated officer will be responsible for ensuring the exact details of the conversation and situation are recorded and this information will be given to the investigating child protection agencies.
* Staff will not attempt to carry out investigations into the allegations or suspicions of abuse. They have a clear understanding that to do so will cause the child to be in significant danger and delay the intervention of the relevant professionals.

**Allegations against staff/volunteers**Every effort is made by Overton Playcentre to ensure only suitable adults are employed as staff members or welcomed as volunteers. This is facilitated by CRB checks and a robust recruitment policy. All parties will be treated fairly and with respect. Allegations against staff/volunteers may occur because they behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may cause harm to a child; have committed a serious criminal offence against a child or children; behave inappropriately towards children deeming them unsuitable to work with children. In any of these circumstances:* Should any parent/carer, child, volunteer or staff member have any concerns regarding the conduct of an employee or volunteer at the Playcentre, the procedures set out in our whistle Blowing policy will be followed.
* Where there are concerns that a child has been put in danger of abuse, or has suffered abuse owing to the actions of a member of staff or volunteer CAFAT and/or the police will be contacted.
* If there is any suspicion of a staff member/volunteer abusing a child, steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child and that of the rest of the group.
* The contact person for reports of complaints or allegations concerning children and young people is the Duty Social Worker on 01978 292039. From here advice will be sought as to whether or not the staff member/volunteer should be informed and if an investigation should take place and by whom.
* If the investigation is to be undertaken by Overton Playcentre, the designated person will follow the Department of Education Guidance for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff. (found in the safeguarding file)
* Gross misconduct procedures may be implemented (see discipline policy) or the complaints procedure depending on the findings.
* Suspension of an employee will be considered where a child is at risk of significant harm; allegations require a police investigation; where the allegation could result in possible dismissal or when suspension would facilitate a comprehensive and unhindered investigation. However a person will not be suspended automatically or without careful consideration being given to the particular circumstances of the case. Prior to any decision to suspend a member of staff/volunteer advice will be sought from the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board; whilst they cannot force a suspension we give considerable weight to their advice.
* Accurate and detailed records will be kept in locked filing cabinet.
* A comprehensive summary of the allegation and all proceedings up to the decision made and action taken will be kept securely in a cabinet for ten years after the allegation is made. The staff member/volunteer will be given a copy.
* Estyn will be informed of any allegations made within 14 days. (029 2044 6446)
* If the allegations are proven to be false, the staff member/volunteer will be informed both orally and in writing of the allegation and that it is without foundation. They will be informed that no further action will be taken and offered support as appropriate.

All staff and volunteers are actively encouraged to read FWLSCB document; Observing Appropriate Boundaries, for a clear understanding of what is and is not acceptable or appropriate behaviour. (found in the safeguarding file)**Recording Information**Personal details of the child concerned must include:* Full name, age or date of birth, gender, race, ethnic origin and address.
* Details of parent/carer and an indication of what, if any, information has been shared.
* The nature of the concerns;
* How and why those concerns have arisen;
* Description of any visible injuries including bruising;
* Any observed changes in child’s behaviour, relationships, etc
* Detailed description of any account of how any injuries occurred.
* Any times and dates or other relevant information;
* A clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay or opinion;
* Full details of the person about whom the concern/allegation is made including full name, date of birth, address, relationship the child concerned and/or position held in the setting, if any;
* Any information you have on the child’s developmental needs;
* Information about the person making the referral, including contact details, role and relationship to the child.

The contact details of the social services duty officer or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, and any agreed action to be taken should be recorded.**Photography/video**At Overton Playcentre we often use videos and photography in our daily sessions as a tool for recording achievements, displays and in the ‘this is me’ book given to each child at the end of their time with us. We may also use photography in promotional literature such as advertisement booklets, posters or leaflets or on our web site. Parents/carers are informed of this in the Welcome Pack and are given a consent form to sign. Any parent/carer has the option to refuse this permission. Overton Playcentre will respect this decision and ensure photographs are not displayed or used in any of the afore mention medias. All children have the right to decide whether they feel comfortable being photographed or filmed and this is taken into account. Should permission be denied or if it is apparent that the child feels uncomfortable, staff will not take photos or films of that child.Only children for whom we have received written permission from their parents/carers will feature in any publicity. For this purpose they will be given a separate consent form.Prior to any public event (i.e. Christmas Play) a member of staff will check all children can be photographed and the consent forms are present. A written notice will be sent out to all parents/carers of children to inform them that the event will be recorded and that parents/carers attending will be allowed to take photo’s of the performance. They will be given the opportunity to voice any concerns and/or opt to remove their child from the performance. Advice will always be given at the start of the performance. Staff and volunteers will not take photographs/films when in a 1:1 situation.Mobile phone photography/video is NOT ALLOWED (see below)**Computers/IT equipment*** Staff/volunteers will not use the settings equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material. This will result in gross misconduct procedures being implemented and dismissal.
* Passwords are kept confidential and unauthorised access will not be allowed.
* Should indecent images of children or any inappropriate material be found on setting computers, staff will immediately inform the designated officer or in her absence, chair of the committee.
* In this event the IT equipment will be isolated with witnesses present to ensure the safe preservation of any evidence.
* The IT equipment will be immediately locked away and all adults on the premises (including the designated officer/manager) will be denied sole access.
* The designated officer will inform the relevant authorities and await further advice.

**Phones*** All staff members and volunteers are instructed to keep mobile phones in their bags in the office during session times.
* Personal mobile phones are only permitted during the session in the case of a personal emergency.
* Visitors to the Playcentre are also asked not to use their mobile phones within the setting.

This policy has been written in accordance with the Flintshire & Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board. It will be kept under review and supported by appropriate training.The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of Overton Playcentre and who come into direct contact with the children in our care.It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. In the unlikely event that it is felt that Overton Playcentre has not responded appropriately to concerns, it is open to each individual to contact the child protection agencies direct.The registered provider must inform Estyn of any allegations as soon as it is reasonably practicable but at the latest within 14 days of an allegation being made. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.The policy and procedures contained within are written using the following documents as guidance:* All Wales Child Protection Procedure 2008
* CSSIW National Minimum Standards
* Children’s Act 1989, 2004 & 2006
* Education Act 2002
* Data Protection Act 1998
* Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975)
* Common Assessment Framework, A guide for Practitioners
* Department of Education, Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other staff.
* Flintshire & Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board, Guidance for employees and volunteers whose work brings them into contact with children and young people: Observing Appropriate Boundaries.
* NHS website: advice on minor head injuries
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**This document is approved and authorised for the application with Overton Playcentre.**