SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Little Acorns Community Crèche is committed to creating a safe and stimulating environment for children, where the care and welfare of children is protected and they are encouraged to reach their full potential, in line with the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

‘Safeguarding’ according to Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017) is referred to as:

* Promoting the welfare of the child and young person;
* Preventing harm, through early identification of risk & appropriate, timely intervention
* Protecting children and young people from harm.

Little Acorns Community Creche is registered with and inspected by the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The setting also complies with the latest Child Protection and Safeguarding guidance outlined bythe Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (2017). It is important parents are aware that information can be shared, **without parental consent**, if staff have a reasonable concern that a child may be at risk or is suffering abuse or neglect.

All members of staff have a ‘duty of care’ toward the children that attend Little Acorns and must comply with the ‘**Safeguarding proecdures’** outlined in the Childminding and day Care Minimum Standards (2012), such as;

* Be aware of safeguarding procedures; know the types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and exploitation), recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.
* Complete certified training on Safeguarding & Child Protection, which must be updated every 3 years.
* Never leave children unsupervised.
* Observe the appropriate adult:child ratios at all times.
* Record any injuries on arrival of child; get explanation and parental signature.
* Maintain confidentiality, at all times, and only share information on a need to know basis e.g. to the Trust child protection teams, Gateway/Regional Emergency Social Work Service.
* Restrict access to children by identifying the person before they can enter the building.
* Ensure the setting is safe and secure, so children can never come to harm.
* Record a log of visitors and supervise in presence of children.
* Adhere to collection policy, namely, children must be brought to and collected from the setting by parents or those who act as parents. If parents give other people permission to collect their child, they must be over 18 and prior knowledge given. Only those under 18 who can collect a child, are their parents.
* Follow the Whistleblowing policy by reporting and concerns staff have regarding the practice of their colleagues, volunteers or trainees relating to the care of the children.

Little Acorns Crèche is committed to developing the practice of Safeguarding when it comes to our staff be ensuring each member of staff;

* Completes vetting to the required Trust standard.
* Undertakes a pre-employment interview
* Provides at least 2 written references, prior to employment or voluntary work,
* Have completed a fit persons assessment, where relevant, before induction and commencement of position,
* And will be subject to a probationary period

Staff have been advised if they have a concern or if a child makes a disclosure they must:

**Stay Calm**

**Listen Carefully to the child.** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to ‘shut down’, retract or stop talking

**Let them know they’ve done the right thing.** Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse a secret.

**Tell them it’s not their fault.** Abuse is never the child’s fault and they need to know this.

**Say you will take them seriously.** A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won’t be believed. They’ve told you because they want help and trust you’ll be the person who will listen to and support them.

**Explain what you’ll do next.** If age appropriate, explain to the child you’ll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help.

**Don’t delay reporting the abuse.** The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible to the Designated Child Protection Officer on duty so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

Reporting a Concern/Disclosure

1. Record all relevant information (FACTS only, no opinions) sign and date the report
2. report all concerns immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)
3. DCPO to contact the **Gateway Team** (02871314090) during office hours or the **Regional Emergency Social Work Services** (02895049999) outside office hours.

**Designated Child Protection Officers are available in the setting during office hours:**

* + **Mrs Katie Taylor**
  + **Miss Christine Gillespie**