



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Introduction

York Childcare (YC) believes that children have the right to be completely safe both from the fear and reality of abuse and is committed to protecting all children in YC's care from harm. YC aim to reassure parents that their children are safe whilst in our care.

This policy and its corresponding procedures have been developed for the protection of children, staff, and visitors to our settings.

It should be read and applied in conjunction with other policies relating to the welfare of children and staff, regarding Behaviour, Special Educational Needs, Equality and Inclusion, and Confidentiality.

The policy has been developed to meet the requirements of the Prevent Duty, the Children Act (1989 & 2004), and the document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and follows guidance issued by the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) and the NSPCC. These policies and procedures will be reviewed at regular intervals and additionally when there are relevant changes to legislation.

Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse manifests itself in many ways.

All staff shall have child protection training and shall be vigilant to signs and evidence of abuse. A summary of the definitions can be found at the end of this document.

Recruitment

All staff, students over 16 and volunteers are carefully recruited. This includes scrutiny of application forms, investigating any gaps in employment history, verification of all references, identity checks, and ensuring all employees have full and up-to-date enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Employees are asked, at the time of application for a written declaration confirming that they have no past convictions, cautions or pending cases which suggest any risk to children.

Prevent Duty

YC is committed to keeping safe the families in the local community and surrounding areas. As far as possible staff will monitor all the families linked with their setting and ensure their welfare is promoted. Should there be a concern regarding a family felt to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism, nursery staff will take the following action:

- Assess the risk of the child and family being drawn into terrorism.
- Contact the relevant authorities should there be any concern. (Identifying which organisations or authorities are 'relevant' will be identified during discussions with the other professional contacted, e.g. the LADO or other representative from the CYSCP.)

Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 YC have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to North Yorkshire Police, Channel Police Practitioner by phoning 101.

British Values

YC is committed to preventing extremism and will promote British Values in the best way possible, for example by:

- Promoting Democracy: allowing children to contribute to the rules of the setting, allowing the children to talk about their feelings and behaviour and encouraging children to share their views.



- Implementing a Rule of Law: allowing children to understand their behaviours and behaviours of others and what the consequences are, distinguishing right from wrong.
- Promoting individual liberty: allowing the children to develop a positive sense of themselves, providing ways for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase confidence in their own abilities.
- Promoting mutual respect and tolerance: ensuring that the setting is inclusive and tolerant of all faiths, cultures and races, and promote children's engagement in the wider community.

Staff Support and Training

YC is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection through the provision of support and training to the staff. YC will therefore ensure that:

- All staff and students are given a copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy during their induction and will have its implications explained to them.
- All staff, long term students and volunteers receive regular training and supervision in child protection issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance.
- All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Manager.
- YC will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse consistent with its duties to protect the safety of the children and uphold fair processes for staff, students, and volunteers.
- All staff will be made aware of the Department of Health's Booklet "What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused" (2015) and its recent guidance on "Protecting Children from Harm". These documents provide further definitions of abuse.
- All staff will be made aware of the Prevention and Referral routemaps produced by CYSCB (www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk).
- All staff will be made aware of the Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (Published June 2015).

Safe Caring Procedure

All staff shall ensure they understand YC's Safeguarding Children Procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring. To this end:

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise the time when members of staff, students, volunteers, or professionals working to support a child (eg speech and language therapist) are left alone with a child. If staff find themselves alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff informed. If outside, they should remain within the sight of others.
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, student, or volunteer, this must be recorded in the Incident Record Book and discussed with the parent /carer.
- Staff must be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will always be avoided.



- Staff must keep records noting any unusual bruises or marks or significant changes in behaviour and share any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Manager.
- When a child is absent without explanation, nursery staff must contact a family member to make enquiries within 24 hours of the absence.
- Any allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded in the Incident Record Book, including any actions. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.
- Each setting shall appoint a member of staff as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This person shall have suitable experience, training and expertise and will be responsible for liaising with Social Services, the CYSCP and Ofsted in any child protection matter.

Dealing with Allegations

Any allegation of abuse will be treated seriously and sensitively and responded to using the following procedures:

- YC will notify the MASH Team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub- formerly 'The Frontdoor Service') and will follow the guidance issued for each individual case. The phone number for this service is 01904 551900. The email address is mash@york.gov.uk
- When actual abuse comes to the attention of a member of staff, they must report this to the Nursery Manager and DSL at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Staff are encouraged to trust their professional judgement and to report if they suspect abuse has taken place.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and maintained.
- Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting evidence or information from members of staff.
- YC will demonstrate care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.
- The Manager and DSL will be responsible for ensuring that written records are signed, dated, and kept confidentially, in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy.
- The Manager or DSL will share concerns with the child's parents/carers unless it is considered that to inform them will put the child at increased risk of harm. It may be appropriate to complete an Early Help Assessment form (EHA) to assess the needs of the child and family. (For more information see www.yor-ok.org.uk under the section for Practitioners)
- The Manager and DSL may make the decision to take no immediate action but to monitor the situation. Alternatively, they may feel the situation requires them to discuss their concerns with local statutory child protection agencies e.g. CYSCP or Children's Services Department.
- Staff will ensure that concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Any child involved in alleged incidents will be comforted and reassured.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Nursery Manager or the DSL, the CEO or a representative from the Management Board must be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation or delegate this role to a senior member of staff.

If an Allegation is Made by a Child

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation or a disclosure, the member of staff concerned will:

- Listen fully to what the child has to say
- Make no observable judgement
- Ask open questions that encourage the child to feel free to speak in their own words.
- Ensure the child is safe, comfortable, and not left alone.



- Make no promises that cannot be kept (such as promising not to tell anyone).

Once aware of an allegation, the Manager or DSL will initially follow the procedures outlined above. The decision may then be taken to refer the case to the local statutory child protection agencies e.g. CYSCP or Children's Services Department, details of which can be found on saferchildrenyork.gov.uk.

If an Allegation is Made Against a Member of Staff

If a child abuse allegation is made against a member of staff, YC will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within the same working day. The LADO will then decide what action to take. It is likely that the member of staff will be suspended on full pay pending a full investigation. Ofsted and Children's Services must also be informed within the same day. The LADO will advise if the police should be notified.

Please note that suspension is a neutral act and does not imply that the member of staff is guilty of any offence. Outcomes from Disciplinary procedures will inform the course of action to be taken.

Referring Allegations to Child Protection Agencies

If following an initial internal inquiry, the Manager or DSL has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been, or is in grave danger of being, subject to abuse, the following procedure will be activated:

- Contact will be made at the earliest possible opportunity with the local social services department.
- The Manager or DSL will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by social services, the CYSCP and the police.
- At all times the safety, protection and interest of children concerned will take precedence. The Manager and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.
- YCL will assist social services, the CYSCP and the police as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.
- Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.

Photographs

YC is aware of the possible misuse of photographs taken of children at nursery. It ensures that digital photographs taken in its settings are stored securely. Separate policies regarding parental consents for still or video photographs are found within the Photography Policy. Any images uploaded onto any internet sites will be in accordance with this policy (ie the Safeguarding Policy), the Photography Policy and with the IT Policy.

Parents and Carers

The policy and procedures will be shared with parents/carers during the child's settling in period. This policy will be available on the website (www.yorkchildcare.co.uk). Hard copies are available on request.



Staff, Students and Volunteers

YC is committed to providing an environment where, through safe working practices, staff, students, and volunteers feel safe and supported.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the Covid19 pandemic, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. York Childcare nurseries ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

Staff may require appropriate instruction and training on identifying and supporting vulnerable children and parents that return to the setting, for example by signposting them to appropriate local services such as mental health, domestic or substance abuse services. It will be necessary to consider how vulnerable children, who are currently attending the setting, continue to have their needs met and to be supported as the setting takes on more children.

Fabricated and Induced Illness

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) by parents or carers is child abuse and can cause significant harm to children. FII involves a well child being presented by a parent/carer as ill, or a disabled child being presented with more significant problems than he/she has in reality.

This may result in extensive, unnecessary medical procedures and investigations being carried out in order to establish the underlying causes for the reported signs and symptoms. The child may also have treatments prescribed, investigations or operations which are unnecessary. These interventions can result in children spending long periods of time in hospital and some, by their nature, may also place the child at risk of suffering from harm (physical illness, disability or even death).

FII can also lead to emotional difficulties for the child and confusion over their own health status.

Professionals need to focus on the impact of FII on the child's health and development – this is crucial to ensure an appropriate safeguarding response. Other terms are sometimes used to describe FII, some of which are out of date or used predominantly in other countries (e.g., Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy).

<https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/Downloads/CYSCP%20FII%20Practice%20Guidance%20.pdf>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna. Religious, social, or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It is dangerous and a criminal offence.

From October 2015, the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) introduced a mandatory reporting duty for all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales. Professionals must make a report to the police, if, in the course of their duties: They are informed by a girl under the age of 18 that she has undergone an act of FGM, or, they observe physical signs that an act of FGM may have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18.

YC is committed to comply with the law and will ensure staff receive appropriate training on spotting the signs of FGM and how to deal with a disclosure.



Summary of the 4 Categories of Abuse

- Physical abuse – this involves hitting, shaking, burning, scalding, throwing, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse – this involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.
- 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.
- Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, such as is likely to impact on their health, development, or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter, or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill health. It includes failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect can also manifest itself as failure to meet the basic emotional needs of the child.

Further guidance on recognising abuse can be found on www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk in the tab "Concerned about a Child".

Contact telephone numbers – correct as at the date of writing this policy

Local authority MASH team 01904 551900

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Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for York: 01904 551783

City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) 01904 551783

Non-emergency police 101

Government helpline for extremism concerns 020 7340 7264

Ofsted 0300 123 1231