



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Covid-19 Annex

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# Safeguarding and Child Protection Covid-19 Annex Policy

## 1 Scope & Purpose

- 1.1 In line with our current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to highlight procedure and any changes to practice in response to Covid-19 and as some children return to playgroup.
- 1.2 To ensure that all staff continue to operate within our current Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and are aware of any changes.

## 2 Outline

- 2.1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#safeguarding-and-welfare>

### **Government guidance for early years settings states that:**

“Settings must continue to have a practitioner designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding. It is acceptable for the safeguarding lead not to be based on-site if this is not practical, for example they may be working from home or be based at another setting, as long as they are still available to provide support, advice and guidance to staff. It is important that all childcare staff and volunteers have access to designated safeguarding lead practitioner and know on any given day who that person is and how to speak to them.

- 2.2 During the period of lockdown, the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leads) remain the same and are:

Helen Dearlove, Jayne Hughes in her absence, and Michelle Barrow on her return to work (from maternity leave).

Our deputy DSL, Jenny Dowman, is shielding during this time but is able to talk to staff about any concerns on the phone – 07712 175015.

In the event of absences Mel Truman is the Acting Deputy Safeguarding lead.

During working hours there will be a DSL or deputy available at all times when children are present, for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will continue to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children, ensuring that all policies and procedures are implemented and shared with staff. They will liaise with local statutory children’s services, and with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board. They will provide support, advice and guidance to other staff on an on-going basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required.



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- 2.3** Should a member of staff believe a child to be in immediate danger they should follow safeguarding procedures as normal and in line with guidance from the SLBC.

Any member of staff or visitor to the setting who receives a disclosure of abuse, suspects that abuse may have occurred or is concerned for the safety or welfare of a child **must** report to the DSL or if unavailable to the Deputy.

If the child is believed to be in immediate danger the DSL/Deputy will call 999 immediately and speak to the police and inform Children's Services by telephone.

If abuse or neglect is suspected or there is other concern about the welfare or well-being of any child the DSL or Deputy will contact the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub** immediately.

E-mail: [swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01793 466903 (during normal office hours which are 8.30am to 4.40pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.30am to 4.00pm Friday).

The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) is available outside office hours on 01793 436699.

#### **2.4 Early Help and children with SEND**

Staff will continue to support children with an EHCP by regular contact if they are not attending playgroup and through direct contact as they return to the setting.

The DSL and SENDCO will continue to cooperate with the local authority in the performance of its SEND duties and will complete any relevant risk assessments. The SEND will continue to monitor the well-being of any children with an EHCP to support their development and to address any areas where regression may have taken place.

The DSL and SENDCO will liaise with parents and the relevant school to support the planning of transition to school for any children with an EHCP.

Where staff have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will continue to follow the early help process. This will include identifying emerging problems, discussing concerns with the DSL, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and in some cases acting as the lead professional in undertaking an Early Help Record and Plan. Early Help cases will be kept under constant review and if the situation doesn't appear to be improving consideration will be given to a referral to FCP/MASH.

Staff should be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education and Health Care Plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home



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- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is a privately fostered child.

Particular care will be taken in planning for children with SEND to return to the settings as re-adjustment to the routines in a setting may prove more challenging for some children with SEND than others, and consideration and planning will need to be given as to how support children to settle back into their setting.

Staff will be alert to the fact that there may be children with additional or worsened social, emotional and mental health needs as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and that there may also be children who have fallen further behind their peers as a result of time out of childcare settings, or missed diagnosis as a result of a period of absence.

The Manager/SENDCO will ensure they have the staffing needed to support children with SEND at safe ratios.

We will continue to consult the [EHC needs assessments and plans guidance](#).

## 2.5 Managing Allegations against Staff

We continue to follow the SWCPP for managing allegations against staff using the flowchart below:

[file:///C:/Users/Office/Downloads/2 Swindon Allegation Management Flowchart 8.8.19 Official.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Office/Downloads/2%20Swindon%20Allegation%20Management%20Flowchart%208.8.19%20Official.pdf)

Staff/Volunteers will report an allegation about a member of staff immediately to the designated safeguarding lead, unless they are the subject of the allegation. Designated safeguarding lead will then proceed as outlined below.

Where the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding lead the member of staff/volunteer will contact the LADO as outlined below:

Allegation Management Team – (01793) 463854

Jon Goddard (LADO) – 07392 103019 (Monday – Wednesday 9am – 5pm)

Rachel Hull (LADO) – 07824 081177 (Thursday – Friday 9am – 5pm)

Sean Capewell (Senior IRO) – 07392 103032 (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm)



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Quality Assurance & Review Service, Watt Tyler House (West), 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Swindon, SN1 2JG Allegation Management Referral Forms should be emailed securely to [LADO@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@swindon.gov.uk) via Outlook Encryption.

If you do not have outlook Encryption please contact us to acquire a secure link.

An allegation must not be discussed with the alleged perpetrator or other members of staff/committee, unless advised to do so by the LADO.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to protect the child by contacting the police, before contacting the LADO.

As soon as an allegation is made the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted. The LADO will advise on the appropriate action to be taken.

The setting will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if at the end of the allegation process a member of staff or volunteer is removed from their position, or if they leave while under investigation.

## **2.6 Staff will continue to support children and families to address issues related to online safety**

Children in the setting will not have access to tablets or computers so that there will be no risk to them.

The DSL will share information with families whose children have not returned to the setting to support them in addressing issues around online safety and using the guidance below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners>

If you are worried about a child in relation to their online activity for any reason, it is important to tell someone straightaway following our usual safeguarding and child protection policy: reporting concerns immediately to the DSL so that the correct steps are taken from the start.

Ensure that the child's own words are used and are not changed in any way when recording a concern; avoid asking leading questions. A calm and non-judgemental approach is key, particularly if it is about a sensitive issue.

If you are concerned about the behaviour of a colleague online, follow your allegations procedures and report and record to your DSL or your Manager. If you are unhappy with the response you receive, follow your settings whistleblowing policy. You can also contact NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

Staff will refer to government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners>



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## 2.7 Mental Health and well-being

Staying at home for a prolonged period and the change of routine may have caused difficulties for some children, such as changes in behaviour and mood.

As more children return to settings, setting should consider the mental health, pastoral or wider wellbeing support children may need, including with bereavement, and how to support them to transition into the setting after a long period of absence.

We will consult government guidance as a starting point:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

The Manager and DSL will support staff with identifying and supporting vulnerable children and parents that return to the setting, for example by sign-posting them to appropriate local services such as mental health, domestic or substance abuse services.

The Manager and DSL will continue to maintain regular contact with all parents sharing information to support emotional well-being as well as activity ideas to support them at home.

## 2.8 The EYFS

The [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) sets the standards that schools and childcare settings must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old.

In response to Covid-19 the DfE has amended legislation to allow for the temporary disapplying and modifying of a number of requirements within the EYFS, giving settings flexibility to respond to changes in workforce availability and potential fluctuations in demand while ensuring children are kept safe. These temporary changes came into force on 24 April 2020.

Full details of the amendments can be found in the guidance on [early years foundation stage statutory framework \(EYFS\)](#), which also includes details about how the temporary arrangements will be brought to an end.

All staff had updated paediatric first aid training this year so there will always be staff on site who are fully trained.

Whilst some of our staff cannot return to work because they are higher risk we have created bubbles of 8 children and 2 staff with them at all times. Where a child with an EHCP has returned an additional member of staff will be present to provide 1:1 support. The Manager and DSL will be on site at all times during our opening hours: Monday to Thursday 8am to 3pm. Friday will be closed for deep cleaning. Staff working in the rooms with the children are suitably qualified.



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*“Following the amendments to the EYFS from 24 April, early years settings only need to use reasonable endeavours to deliver the learning and development requirements set out in the EYFS. We understand that these are exceptional circumstances and the priority at this time is keeping children safe and well cared for. As far as possible, children should benefit from a broad range of educational opportunities”.*

With this guidance in mind staff will not take written observations or update learning journeys. Staff will support children who return to playgroup focusing on their communication and interaction and social and emotional well-being across the 7 areas of learning through the organisation of the environment and provision of resources where possible.

Staff will support children in their play as usual with the emphasis on being at their level, alongside them and engaged in play with them as much as possible.

Transition and end of year reports will be completed using the most recent tracking data (mid-March 2020) for all children.

## **2.9 Keeping staff and children safe on site**

Playgroup staff work in line with DfE guidance “Implementing Social Distancing in education and childcare settings”.

All staff will complete a risk assessment to identify any factors and health conditions which put them at higher risk from Covid-19.

Those at higher risk will remain at home.

A Covid-19 risk assessment documenting all strategies to maintain the safety and well-being of children and adults on site has been sent to all members of staff to ensure that they understand and adhere to measures which will reduce risk and maintain high levels of hygiene.

### **This policy was adopted by Croft Playgroup**

Signed on behalf of the Croft Playgroup

Croft Playgroup Committee

Croft Playgroup Manager

Print Name: Sarah Bryant

Print Name: Michelle Barrow, Helen Dearlove

Signed.....

Signed.....

Dated.....

Dated.....

*Date policy to be reviewed:*