

## **Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy**

### **Principle**

Rainbow Stop Playgroup is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children; promoting their rights and best interests.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with the legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the five main principles of the Order, the first being “the welfare of the child is paramount”.

### **Policy**

Everyone at Rainbow Stop Playgroup who comes into contact with children and their families have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. At Rainbow Stop Playgroup management/staff/volunteers will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, culture traditions and home background.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup helps children establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup works with parents/carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

### **Procedure**

**In accordance with Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Social Services and based on Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures at Rainbow Stop Playgroup we will endeavour to safeguard children by:**

#### ***Key commitment 1***

Rainbow Stop Playgroup is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

#### ***Staff/Students/Trainees and Volunteers***

- Our Designated Child Protection Officer is: Victoria Costello
- Our Deputy Child Protection Officer is: Stephanie Graham

- Other Child Protection Officers:

At Rainbow Stop Playgroup we endeavour to ensure that:

- All staff and parents/carers are made aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup provides adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the current up to date vetting procedures before posts can be confirmed. No person will be placed in a position (either paid or unpaid) which involves contact with children without being properly and effectively vetted.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- The setting adheres to the Health and Social Care Trust requirements in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff/students/trainees and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Students/trainees/volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup adheres to the relevant guidelines in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup has a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- There are security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

### ***Key commitment 2***

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set out.

### **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, neglect, as well as exploitation.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key worker/staff member makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.

- Those involved will take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

**The management team will use detailed procedures and reporting format when making a referral to Gateway.**

- Contact Early Years Link Social Worker/Early Years Team.
- Where a child is already known to Social Services and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

**Recording suspicions of abuse**

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, a member of staff will:

- Listen to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
- Not question the child.
- Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
  - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
  - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
  - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time;
  - the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.

**Making a referral to Gateway**

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will follow any procedures that the Gateway team has in place.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will also inform our link social worker that we have made a referral to the Gateway team.
- Where the child already has a social worker, Rainbow Stop Playgroup will contact them directly.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will retain a copy of any forms filled in for Gateway in the child's personal file.
- All staff are aware of the referral procedures for recording and reporting.

**Informing parents**

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where guidance does not allow this.

- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officer will inform parents.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will work with the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.
- All staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup has procedures for contacting the Health and Social Care Trust on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and the Trust to work well together.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will notify the Health and Social Care Trust of any incident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
- If a referral is to be made to the Gateway team, Rainbow Stop Playgroup will act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

### **Allegations against staff**

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup ensures that all parents know the complaints policy if they have concerns regarding the behaviour or actions of staff/students/trainees/volunteers within the setting.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff, student/trainee/volunteer within the setting, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- Management will refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway team and the link social worker to investigate. Rainbow Stop Playgroup is aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- The Management of Rainbow Stop Playgroup will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Gateway team/Early Years Team.
- Where the management team and Health and Social Care Trust agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, management will suspend the member of staff/volunteer/student/trainee, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

### **Disciplinary action**

- Where a member of staff/student/trainee/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, management will notify Gateway/Early Years and the Independent Safeguarding Authority of relevant information so that individuals who pose a

threat to children (and vulnerable adults), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

### ***Key commitment 3***

Rainbow Stop Playgroup is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout child protection training for staff. Rainbow Stop Playgroup is also committed to empowering young children, through our curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### **Training**

- Management will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible abuse including:
    - Physical abuse, is deliberately physically hurting a child.
    - Emotional abuse, is a persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse.
    - Sexual abuse, occurs when others use or exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others.
    - Neglect, is a failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.
    - Exploitation, which is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking.
    - Domestic Violence, which is violent or aggressive behaviour within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner.
    - Female Genital Mutilation, which is the practice, traditional in some cultures, of partially or totally removing the external genitalia of girls and young women for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in many countries.
- And that they are aware of the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines for making referrals.
- Management will ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
  - Management will ensure that staff/volunteers are trained in Safeguarding Children/Child Protection in line with current regulations and this will be reviewed annually at staff appraisals where training needs can be identified.

### **Planning**

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff/volunteer/students/trainees in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

### **Curriculum**

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup introduces key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they may develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup creates a culture of value and respect for every individual within the setting, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for all children.

### **Confidentiality**

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust.

### **Support to families**

- Rainbow Stop Playgroup believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup makes clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Health and Social Care Trust.
- Rainbow Stop Playgroup follows child protection guidelines as set out by Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.

### **Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCNI)**

Rainbow Stop Playgroup is aware of the referral system of UNOCNI – Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. The registering social worker and the Gateway Team will keep us informed of any changes and training available.

### **COVID 19**

Please refer to COVID – 19 Policy for procedures in relation to Coronavirus.

#### **Useful Contact Numbers:**

Playgroup Leader & Designated Child Protection Officer:	028 3755 1085
Chairperson:	028 3755 1085
Gateway (9.00am – 5:00pm):	028 3756 7100
	080 034 3434

Regional Emergency Social Work

(Out of Hours Emergency Number):  
Social Worker:  
NI Public Service Ombudsman:  
PSNI Central Referral Unit:

028 9504 9999  
028 3756 4020  
080 0343 424  
028 9025 9299

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was adopted by Rainbow Stop Playgroup's management team.

Signed: .....  
(on behalf of the Management Team)

Position: .....

Date: .....

Reviewed on:

Date: ..... Signed.....

Date: ..... Signed .....

**Child Protection**

Do you have a concern about your child or another child in the setting?

If so you can speak to any of the following named designated child protection officers:

Designated Officer:

Victoria Costello - Leader

028 37551085



**OR**

Deputy Designated Officer:

Stephanie Graham – Deputy Leader

028 37551085



**OR**

You can also contact the Gateway Team in Armagh

028 37415285

Out of Hours Gateway Team 028 95049999

**OR**

You can contact Social Services directly and Speak to the Playgroup

Social Worker Joan Dobbin

028 3756 4020

**OR**

NI Public Services Ombudsman Tel: 0800 343 424

**OR**

PSNI Central Referral Unit at 028 9025 9299