

Safeguarding Policy Addendum during Covid-19



Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for settings to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely needed to attend.

Childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children who have a parent that is critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

From 1st June settings were asked to start a phased re-opening. Barnett Wood Preschool were able to offer care to a limited number of children and used the government guidelines to prioritise places.

From 4th September the preschool welcomed all children back.

This addendum of the current Safeguarding Policy contains details of our individual safeguarding arrangements during the COVID-19 period.

Key contacts

Our DSL and DDSL remain the same and staff should use the details on our policy should they need to contact either one out of hours.

A DSL/DDSL will always be available during pre-school hours. Where a DSL/DDSL is not onsite, they will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely. They will also ensure that regular checks are done on the SSCP and NSPCC websites for updates.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

Those who have a social worker include children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan, a Child in Need Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority.

Those with an EHCP will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a pre-school place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHCP's can safely remain at home.

We will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be Louise Pruthi.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk and/or there is a formal agreement with the Social Worker. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Manager will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent. We as a pre-school will ensure that all professionals involved with these vulnerable children, (e.g. social workers, SEND case workers, Early Help worker etc) are fully informed around non-attendance of the child and if not attending pre-school the arrangements that we have put in place around safeguarding this child.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, the DSL or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

We will encourage our vulnerable children to attend the setting.

Attendance

Attendance will be monitored, and Barnett Wood Preschool will continue to follow the usual policy for non-attendance.

Expectations of Education settings

To ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe and protected we will report all non-attendance of vulnerable children to the local authority using their new tracking system.

We will notify the local authority on the first day of non-attendance and any day following, when a vulnerable child, that is expected to attend the setting is absent, by using the following link to the Automated Tracking Mechanism: <https://www4.surreycc.gov.uk/social/child/absence-submission-portal/>

The Automated Tracking Mechanism, described above, immediately alerts the Social Work Team to act in response to the child's non-attendance at the education setting. Surrey Virtual School will be informed if the child is looked after.

On receipt of an alert the social work team must act to contact the family to find out why the child hasn't attended and act to encourage them to attend if it's safe to do so.

The social work team must act to contact us to further inform their assessment of the risk to the child of non-attendance.

If a child is not presenting at an education setting because they are symptomatic or self-isolating it is essential that the social worker contact the setting and any relevant partner (including Surrey Virtual School), to action arrangements for maintaining contact with the child and agree who will contact the child and how.

It may be necessary for a Social Worker to take action by visiting the child in person to establish their wellbeing.

Keeping in touch with the child and the family during any isolation period is the responsibility of the team around that child. A clear plan for visiting (virtual or in person) must be made and acted upon by all partners. The team around the child partners must communicate to the Social Worker findings from each visit they undertake.

Due to the number of notifications it is not possible for social care to guarantee a response time, each response time will be based on the Social Work Team's analysis of risk.

If Barnett Wood Preschool has significant concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing we will ring the child's Social Worker for an urgent discussion. If the child's social worker is not available a discussion should be held with the Social Work Team Manager. If neither are available contact must be made with the Social Work Service Manager. If we are not satisfied with the response we get from the Social Work Team we will follow the SSCP Inter- Agency Escalation Policy and Procedures.

Where any staff continue to have concerns about the safety of a child they should email a Children's Services Request for Support Form to cspa@surreycc.gov.uk or contact the C-SPA on 0300 470 9100.

Reporting a concern

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in Barnett Wood Preschools Safeguarding Policy, this includes making a report via C-SPA.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should continue to follow our normal procedures and alert the manager immediately.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff to the manager immediately.
- If an allegation is made against the manager, the concerns need to be raised with the directors or Deputy Manager.
- There may be situations when the Manager or Directors will want to involve the police immediately if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.
- Once an allegation has been received by the DSL or Manager they will contact the LADO on 0300123 1650 option 3 LADO Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk immediately and before taking any action or investigation.
- Following consultation and advice from the LADO inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to
- In liaison with the LADO, the setting will determine how to proceed and if necessary, the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the setting to seek guidance from local authority colleagues in following procedures set out in part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2019) and the SSCP procedures.

Safeguarding Training and Induction

All DSL training has been suspended by Surrey County Council Education Safeguarding Team and it is very unlikely to take place whilst there remains a threat of the COVID 19 virus.

For the period COVID-19 measures are in place, a DSL (or deputy) who has been trained will continue to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing pre-school staff have had safeguarding training. The DSL will communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Where new staff are recruited, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are deployed from another education or children's workforce setting to our setting, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that: -

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of our setting's child Safeguarding policy which contains confirmation of local processes DSL arrangements.

Safer recruitment

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, we will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for our setting.

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.

We will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult in line with advice from the LADO where appropriate.

Online safety

We will continue to provide a safe environment, including the use of online materials. This includes the use of appropriate filters and monitoring systems.

Children and online safety away from setting

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy and where appropriate referrals will still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

We will ensure any use of online tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR legislation.

Barnett Wood preschool has decided not to use live virtual means to communicate with children and their families. Instead staff will be able to record videos of themselves to share with families which are sent to the manager first for verification before being made available for viewing. Where such videos are recorded the preschool will ensure:

- Staff wear suitable clothing ideally their uniform.
- Any filming or photographs used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms, bathrooms etc.
- Language must be professional and appropriate.
- No family members should be heard or seen in the background.

All staff are reminded to refresh themselves with the following policies if needed:

- Staff code of conduct
- E-Safety

Supporting children not in the setting

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our children. Throughout the lockdown Staff will contact each of the families by phone to 'check-in' to see how they are doing. This may include a chat to the child if they are willing. Any concerns that may be noted or brought up during these conversations will be reported to the DLS or DDSL.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, we will ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that child. For example, more regular welfare checks. This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where further concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

We recognise that the setting is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their parents/carers. Barnett Wood Preschool will be aware of this in setting expectations of parents and children where they are at home.

Families will remain in contact with the setting staff using Tapestry and emails. All families will be monitored, and where there is no regular contact, families will be phoned to ensure they are safe.

Supporting children in the setting

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. We will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The manager will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

We will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID19.

A Covid19 risk assessment is completed and will be reviewed regularly inline with our addendum for the Health and Safety policy.

Barnett Wood preschool is committed to promoting positive mental health attitudes. We recognise that this is a very uncertain time and the daily routines of the children in our care has been disrupted considerably. The staff will continue to be aware of the difficulties facing the children and their families, giving the children attending opportunities to talk about their worries or concerns.

We will ensure that where we care for children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, we ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Supervision and support for staff

Safeguarding of children and our staff is of the highest importance during this time. We are aware that the staff team are working in isolation and will be vulnerable to high levels of anxiety and concern about the families they work with as well as their own health and that of those they live with. The manager will check in with staff working on site at regular intervals. Staff are also able to phone the manager on any day to discuss issues they are concerned about.

As there are less staff in the building during this time all staff must be aware of where the children are and where other staff members are at all times. Staff should not put themselves in any situation that could cause concerns, particularly regarding intimate care situations. If staff are working in a room

alone they must only do so if they feel comfortable with the situation and should speak with a manager about alternative arrangements where needed.

Policy Reviewed August 2020