



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURE**

### **PURPOSE**

At Stepping Stones Nursery, we care for the 'whole' child and as such, we are mindful not just of the child's academic progress but also of his/her physical and emotional well-being.

R.C.T. have set up an Area Child Protection Committee, A-C.P.C., co-ordinating the involvement of different agencies, when a child is considered to be "at-risk". They have produced a procedural handbook using CA 2004 & Safeguarding children to give maximum information regarding child protection, including the process involved when child abuse is suspected. This book is available for all staff to read and is located in the Staff Room.

### **PROCEDURE**

If a member of staff has any concern regarding abuse or neglect of a child you should:

1. Report concerns to Child Protection Officer or senior member of staff.
2. Senior staff will assess the situation and report to Proprietor.
3. Observations should be made and recorded factually (parental permission to be obtained prior to observation, unless the child is at risk of danger from parents, in which case a referral should be made immediately.
4. There are then 3 ways to go forward.
  - No further action – when you believe the child is not under any threat.
  - Written report in Cause for Concern file – recording an observation of child and monitoring the situation and concern.
  - Immediate referral to Social Services or Authority – when observations had shown alarming behavior etc.
5. If a member of staff is not happy with the way it has been dealt with they can contact the Initial Assessment Team on 01685 888800. There are several other contact numbers on the R.C.T. leaflet situated in the staff's copy of the child Protection Policy.

*See Guidelines to Observing & Reporting*

### Guidelines to Observing & Reporting

- Treat the matter seriously.
- Make it clear that others will need to be informed for you to help.
- Tell only those who need to be informed.
- Observe child closely.
- Record as soon as you can after you witness anything that 'rings alarm bells'.
- Keep to Facts.
- You can give your opinion on a situation but make it clear it is just that: **your** opinion.
- Record what our follow up actions were to observation.
- All observations etc. should be photocopied before sending on to Authorities or persons of interest.
- Senior staff should be made aware of action and where observation, report or photocopy of referral is kept. (Office, lockable cupboard) in case of a Child Protection emergency.

### **WE SHOULD NOT**

- Ignore concerns.
- Promise to keep the matter secret.
- Interrogate.
- Speak with anyone about whom the allegations are made, if the child is considered to be in danger.
- Contact the parents or social Services without observation

#### 1. Written report in Cause for Concern File

- Unexplained bruises, burns, bites or finger marks.
- Child's explanation inconsistent with injury.
- Report of a child being left unattended for long periods.
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing.
- Inadequate meeting for basic needs, eg. Nourishment, medical attention.
- Drawings or play activity, which are sexually explicit.
- Sudden changes in normal behaviour patterns.

#### 2. Immediate referral to Social Services or Authority for

- Any reason to believe that a child's injury is of a non-accidental nature.
- Sexual awareness, knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to the child's developmental age.
- Report by a child of sexual assault or unwanted sexual activity.
- Series of incidents recorded in file.

## **GUIDELINES**

This is a delicate area and actions need to be beyond reproach thus', we should:-

- Treat the matter seriously and reassure the child if necessary.
- Make it clear that others will have to be informed.
- Tell only those who need to know.
- Keep a careful watch on the child.
- No child will be discussed over the telephone with anyone at all. However, if the matter is a C.P. issue, information that is recorded can be passed on.
- On noticing anything you are concerned about, report it to the senior member of staff in your unit.
- The senior member of staff will assess the nature of the concern.
- The senior member of staff will report the case to the Proprietor.
- The Proprietor will assess the nature of the case. A record of the case will be made in our Causes for Concern File.
- The Proprietor will take the relevant action necessary.

### **we should not:**

- Promise to keep the matter secret.
- Interrogate the child or ask leading questions.
- Speak with anyone about whom the allegations are made.
- Contact the parents (this is at the discretion of Senior Management and the job of Social Services).

## **CONCLUSION**

We cannot be judgmental. Each case that occurs adds to our knowledge and experience. We need to act with care and thoughtfulness within the procedures and guidelines. All information must be confidential.