



PlayWise Learning CIC:
For Unique Children

Safeguarding Policy

2023 - 2024

Policy Statement

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as; protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring that they are growing up receiving safe and effective care and acting to enable children to have the best outcomes. *(NSPCC.org.uk)*

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children who receive PlayWise Intervention and services
- to provide Board members, staff and volunteers with overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy Statement

This policy has been adopted by PlayWise to signify its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy applies to all Board members, staff, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of PlayWise.

PlayWise believes that a child should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all our children and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children.

PlayWise maintains an up-to-date awareness of national and local guidance and follows appropriate local safeguarding procedures.

PlayWise recognises that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount as enshrined in the Children Act 1989 (as amended) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences their level of dependency ,communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children

PlayWise will seek to keep children safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding/child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers and anyone working on behalf of PlayWise.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made and include, pre employment checks, proof of identity, declaration of criminal convictions along with an up to date DBS
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately

PlayWise is committed to reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and good practice annually.

Signature:



PlayWise Safeguarding Lead

Review Date: July 2023

Reviewed July 2023

Next review July 2024

Signed



Appendix One: Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

1. Recruitment, selection, induction and training procedures for Board members, staff and volunteers

PlayWise Learning Services takes all possible steps to ensure that children are kept safe through:

- safer recruitment processes for all staff, volunteers and board members to include, enhanced DBS checks, rehabilitation of offenders act, reference checks, right to work in UK/leave to remain checks;
- planned induction of all board members, staff and volunteers, to include signed and dated confirmation of their understanding and acceptance of the safeguarding/child protection policy and procedures and code of conduct;
- clear safeguarding/child protection procedures to inform stakeholders new to PlayWise, staff and volunteers about the appropriate action to take in the event of concerns about a child;
- staff attendance at safeguarding/child protection training, and accessing ongoing and refresher training in accordance with PlayWise guidance;
- Board members access effective guidance, training and support to ensure that they are able to work within these procedures.

2. Ongoing support and supervision for staff and volunteers

PlayWise ensures that all volunteers and staff, including the senior worker, access regular, recorded support and supervision in line with PlayWise and are clear about their role and responsibilities, through:

- The implementation of the PlayWise Code of Conduct and methods of practice and safeguarding/child protection code of conduct for board members, staff and volunteers;
- identifying personnel to hold the Strategic Lead and designated responsibilities within PlayWise. (see Appendix 2 below);
- procedures to structure the management of any allegations of abuse against board members, staff or volunteers.

3. Information Sharing

PlayWise has clear expectations of all Board members, staff and volunteers for sharing information about families, parents, children and young people:

- All families supported are made aware of PlayWise's safeguarding/child protection and confidentiality policies;
- a factual dated record of contact with the family and of any concerns about a child(ren) in families supported are kept in line with PlayWise's record keeping and record retention procedures;
- PlayWise recognises the importance of sharing information to protect children and normally the disclosure of the confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the expressed permission of the parents for the purpose of assisting the family, **however** where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of a child, information will be shared with the appropriate authority and families will be kept informed of PlayWise's actions unless to do so would put the child at greater risk of harm

4. Local Partnerships and Procedures

Protecting children is a shared responsibility. In order to fulfil its responsibilities in promoting the welfare and safety of children, PlayWise:

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- Maintains effective links with organisations working with children and their families within the community;
 - participates in local partnership arrangements designed to protect children and promote their wellbeing;
 - Where possible, takes part in local multi-disciplinary training and integrated working in order to maintain an up-to-date understanding of local processes and to take up appropriate opportunities for professional development;
 - is aware of, and holds current information on and works within the requirements of the local procedures followed by statutory and voluntary agencies
 - Where possible identifies a local child protection/safeguarding adviser to support and advise the scheme with regard to local issues and procedures for safeguarding children.

5. Managing Allegations:

The Government is clear that all children, no matter what situation they are in, should be protected from abuse. If staff, volunteers or Board members see or hear anything which causes them to have concerns or to suspect that a child is being abused by someone within PlayWise they should follow the procedures:

- if the allegation is against a PlayWise, member of staff or volunteer, the concern should be reported to the appropriate line manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead, if not the subject of the concerns, is primarily responsible for taking all reasonable steps necessary to secure the safety of any child who may be at risk, by, for example, removing the person who is the subject of the allegation from any situation involving children. S/he will be supported by the safeguarding/child protection team and by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO -England);
- the DSL and/or senior member of staff are responsible for liaising with the police/LADO and Children's Social Care about allegations;
- it is important to remember the company protocols for confidentiality and only those with a need to know should be privy to the details of the situation. This is particularly so for allegations of sexual abuse ;
- paper and electronic records relating to the allegation should be made secure to prevent them being removed or changed;
- irrespective of action by Children's Social Care or the Police, Board members should inform PlayWise staff and follow the appropriate procedure which will normally include, without prejudice, suspension of the PlayWise, staff or volunteer pending investigation. Following the investigation, disciplinary procedures may need to be invoked. See disciplinary procedures document and confidentiality and sharing information.

In the case of a member of staff reporting concerns about a colleague, refer to the DSL

6. Ensuring the Quality of the PlayWise Service

PlayWise will undertake regular assessment/observations/supervisions in order to check and improve its practice.

PlayWise policies and procedures are informed by national guidance and protocols and are regularly reviewed & updated.

All PlayWise policies and procedures are adopted and implemented and are fundamental to effective practice within PlayWise for carrying out responsibilities for safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children.

Appendix Two: Roles and Responsibilities within the Organisation

The Board members and senior management team retain ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children supported by PlayWise. They should agree:

- The member of staff with responsibility for undertaking the **Strategic Lead on Safeguarding**. This is normally a senior staff member. The Board members must ensure that the Strategic Lead receives adequate supervision for their role, in line with PlayWise & National Portage Association guidance;
- the people within the scheme who carry out the designated role of taking responsibility for safeguarding/child protection issues raised by staff or volunteers and for referring concerns for the safety of children.

The organisation's Strategic Lead for Safeguarding:

Name: Yvonne Charalambous – Director of Business & Operations Manager

Contact details: 020 8770 4812 email:yvonne@playwise.org.uk

The role of the PlayWise Strategic Lead for Safeguarding is to:

- (a) Model and promote PlayWise's commitment to safeguarding/protecting children in all aspects of their work and conduct;
- (b) Ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures and code of conduct are available and understood by all Board members, staff and volunteers, and that these are integrated into practice;
- (c) Ensure the scheme's Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children are updated and reviewed annually in line with National Portage Association safeguarding guidance and national and local guidance;
- (d) Ensure appropriate training provision and dissemination of information for Board members, staff and volunteers on safeguarding/child protection issues;
- (e) Take a lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding/child protection issues and providing information, advice and support to Board members, staff and volunteers;
- (f) Support the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Child Protection staff with their responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe, by:
 - Ensuring the provision of regular, recorded supervision;
 - maintaining an overview of records of concern and action (ROCA) and referrals to children's social care;
 - ensuring records are kept appropriately, in line with policy and practice
- (g) Maintain up to date knowledge of national and local safeguarding procedures and liaise appropriately with local agencies with regard to safeguarding issues;
- (h) Collate safeguarding concerns raised by the scheme to identify patterns and inform the development of practice and liaison with other agencies;

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- (i) Notify and liaise with Board members, PlayWise and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) around any allegations of harm or inappropriate Behaviour made against staff, volunteers and Board members;
 - (j) Immediately inform the Chair of Board & members and MASH in the event of the serious harm or death of a child and liaise with other agencies as appropriate;
 - (k) Identify and liaise with a local Specialist Safeguarding Adviser (see below).

External Local Specialist Safeguarding/Child Protection Adviser to the Board members and staff:

Where possible the organisation will maintain close links with the London Borough of Sutton safeguarding teams to seek support and advice with regard to local issues and procedures.

London Borough of Sutton safeguarding teams will:

- (a) Provide a confidential sounding board where there is a safeguarding/child protection concern in a family;
- (b) support the use of local procedures appropriately (e.g. for referral, for escalation or dispute resolution);
- (c) Upon request can provide updates to Board members and the strategic lead about local safeguarding/child protection developments and changes to procedures, policies and agencies;
- (d) Contribute to Board discussions about scheme capacity in working with more complex families, including those where there are safeguarding/child protection concerns

Local Safeguarding/Child Protection Specialist Adviser:

Head of Children with Disabilities Social Work Team - 020 8770 4690

Appendix Three: Female Genital Mutilation

PlayWise works with families from communities where FGM may be a specific type of abuse that could affect the health and wellbeing of mothers and female children in otherwise loving and caring families.

This appendix seeks to make clear what those working with families need to know and the procedures to use.

FGM is illegal, it is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls and therefore will be dealt with as part of existing child and adult safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures.

Under the 2003 Female Genital Mutilation Act it is an offence for any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status) to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act);
- assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a **UK national or permanent UK resident** (section 3 of the Act).

In addition the Serious Crime Bill published on 6 June 2014 contains provisions that extend the extra-territorial reach of the offences in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. so that they apply to offences involving habitual (as well as permanent) UK residents. In view of the above PlayWise Learning Services undertakes to ensure the following:

- That, alongside other safeguarding/child protection training, all those who work with families or support such work will receive specific training about the nature of FGM, the signs to look out for and how it should be dealt with;
- that PlayWise Staff will discuss FGM with families in their initial explanation of our safeguarding procedures;
- that PlayWise will work with other agencies wherever necessary in helping to prevent FGM and in supporting those who are dealing with the results of it. Such working will conform to the procedures outlined in the main safeguarding/child protection policy;
- that concerns about FGM will be recorded and reported using the same procedures as those for any safeguarding/child protection concern.

Useful Resources:

Female Genital Mutilation Resource Pack – www.gov.uk

Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines – Female Genital Mutilation – www.gov.uk

Female Genital Mutilation – Recognising and Preventing FGM - <http://www.fgmelearning.co.uk>

Appendix Four: County Lines

“County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”

County lines’ activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

In view of the above PlayWise Learning Services undertakes to ensure the following:

- That, alongside other safeguarding/child protection training, all those who work with families or support such work will receive specific training about the nature of County Lines, the signs to look out for and how it should be dealt with;
- that PlayWise Staff will discuss County Lines with families in their initial explanation of our safeguarding procedures;
- that PlayWise will work with other agencies wherever necessary in helping to prevent County Lines and in supporting those who are dealing with the results of it. Such working will conform to the procedures outlined in the main safeguarding/child protection policy;
- that concerns about County Lines will be recorded and reported using the same procedures as those for any safeguarding/child protection concern.

Useful resources:

Who is vulnerable to county lines exploitation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines#who-is-vulnerable-to-county-lines-exploitation>

Safeguarding Network: county lines.

<https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-resources/child-criminal-exploitation/county-lines/>

Protection children from county lines: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

Date policy and Procedure adopted: July 2019



Board approved date: July 2019



Date policy to be reviewed July 2020



Date policy to be reviewed July 2021



Date policy to be reviewed July 2022



Date policy to be reviewed July 2023



Date policy to be reviewed July 2024