

## Safeguarding/Child Protection

### **Statement**

Pathways are committed to the safe and happy development of all children, this is done through building a 'culture of safety' in which children and young people are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service. All children attending Pathways will be safeguarded by this principal. All adults involved with the children will also comply with the understanding. Any concerns will result from advice being sought from the appropriate agency.

**Who needs to follow this policy? Everyone** who comes into contact with Pathways, the children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding the children. All adults have a responsibility to equally take appropriate action outlined in this policy.

- Representatives of the nursery will be involved with the development of this policy and the review.
- The welfare of the children is paramount and it is Pathways responsibility to safeguard and promote this.
- The procedures in this policy apply to trustees, staff, volunteers and students and are in line with those of Staffordshire Safeguarding Partners.

The 3 local safeguarding partners are made up of:

- The local authority
- A clinical commissioning group
- Chief officer of police

### **Policy Aims**

- To ensure good practice is consistent.
- Staff have the correct information to meet child protection responsibilities and understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
- Staff to attend safeguarding training.
- To provide for children where they can thrive to their full potential in a safe environment.
- To ensure the well being, physical and emotional safety of every child is met.
- Fulfil legal responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment of all staff by completing DBS checks and suitability checks (disclosure and barring services). (See recruitment policy).
- To ensure procedures are in place to record any visitors to the setting.
- To ensure security steps are taken to ensure we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Report any concerns to the designated person.
- To support children in accordance to agreed child protection plans.
- To ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated.
- To promote positive fundamental British values.

## **Terminology**

**Child protection** - to protect children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Parent** - birth parents or other adults who are in a parental role.

**Staff** - anybody working on behalf of Pathways, full or part time in a paid or voluntary role.

**Child** - all young people who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **Recognising abuse**

**Sexual abuse** - Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Activities may involve physical contact including assault by penetration or non penetrative acts. Non contact activities such as children looking at or included in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities or encouraged to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including the internet)

### **Indicators could be:**

- Comments about sexual activity
- Sexual comments or knowledge which are not what you would expect from a child
- Sexual behaviour which you would not expect from a child
- Inappropriate touching or playing

**Neglect** - Failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect could also occur during pregnancy as a result of substance misuse.

### **Indicators could be:**

- The child's clothes are often dirty or unsuitable for the weather
- No one seeks medical help when the child is ill or hurt
- The child is smelly or dirty
- The child is left alone or with unsuitable carers
- The child is thin, pale, lacking in energy
- Lots of accidents happen to the child

**Physical** - Any physical injury that has not been accidentally caused.

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness on a child.

### **Indicators could be:**

- Unexplained injuries, bruises, fractures or marks
- Fear, watchfulness, over anxiety to please
- Small round burns or bite marks
- Frequent absences from nursery

**Emotional** - The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

This may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not allowing the child to express their views by deliberately silencing them or making fun of them and what they say.

It may feature developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the child.

Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children to feel frightened and in danger.

Exploitation or corruption of children.

**Indicators could be:**

- Unexplained gifts
- Withdrawn, anxious behaviour, lack of self confidence
- Self-harm and changes to their eating habits
- Demanding or attention seeking behaviour
- Unwillingness to communicate
- Repetitive behaviour such as hair twisting, scratching or rocking

**Key Personnel**

The designated safeguarding lead in this area is Mrs Rebecca Owen

The Deputy designated practioner in this area is Miss Linzee Carr and Clare Gillies

Roles and responsibilities of DSL are:

- All are appropriately trained
- Have a sound understanding of the local safeguarding child protection board procedures and attends training at least every two years and regularly updates their knowledge
- Offer advice, guidance, supervision and support
- Act as a support for all in contact with Pathways
- Keeps written records and ensures these stay confidential
- Makes referrals to children's social care or police appropriately
- Attends legal required child protection courses
- Notifies children's social care if a child on a protection plan is absent without explanation.
- If a child on a protection plan leaves Pathways ensure the relevant information is passed on to their new Nursery/School and their social worker is informed.
- Ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.

In the absence of the designated safeguarding lead the deputy is appropriately trained and in the absence of the lead will carry out the role to ensure the safety and protection of all. In the long term absence of the lead the deputy will resume the lead role until the lead returns.

All staff at Pathways are appropriately trained in child protection and are all aware of the procedures to follow and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children's social care team.

The trustees ensure that Pathways has:

- Policies and procedures in line with legal requirements, which are reviewed annually and available on request.
- Has procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff, including them made against any management at Pathways. (See policy of allegations of abuse made against people that work with children)
- Safer recruitment procedures that include the appropriate checks (see safer recruitment policy)

The trustees of Pathways nominate a member to be responsible in liaising with the local authority or other agencies in the event of an allegation been made against a staff member in a managerial role.

Pathways will endeavour to support all children with child protection issues. We will take all disclosures or suspicions seriously. A nominated link person will be appointed to keep all parties informed (usually child's keyworker). Where a member of staff is subject to the allegations made by a pupil your designated persons will be key. If the allegation is against a designated person then the designated trustee will be the key person.

### **Curriculum**

- Pathways introduce 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 so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- The setting creates a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social backgrounds
- Finally Pathways ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

### **Extended off site arrangements**

Where off site activities take place Pathways child protection policy and procedures still apply. If outside agencies provide activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment. Where children attend off site activities we will ensure effective child protection arrangements are in place.

### **Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse**

Ensure your entitlement to a full induction prior to starting is carried out and always follow the nursery policies and procedures.

#### **Precautions that can be taken:**

- Always ensure other staff are around and avoid lone contact with the children
- When working in rooms ensure doors are left open so you can see one another and talk
- Do not arrange to meet children/students outside of the nursery
- Never befriend or chat to students on social network sites
- Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working with students to have a sexual relationship even when the pupil is over the age of consent but under 18 years of age

At Pathways as defined in our policy on Existing Injuries all children arriving with injuries will be recorded and an explanation from the carer may be given and signature to be obtained, this must be done on arrival at the nursery. Any injury noticed during the day after the parent/carers has gone will be recorded, discussed and any necessary advice taken.

As part of safeguarding we would challenge any unsuitable adults in the collection of children. If you appear to be under the influence of any drugs, alcohol or any illness related side effect then we would challenge this upon collection. Our duty of care is that we would not release the child to the parent/carers under these circumstances for safeguarding reasons. We would then be reporting this to First Response

Information received from other parties will be noted, discussed and any necessary advice taken.

Information from children will be taken seriously, noted, discussed and any necessary advice taken.

All unexplained absences and lateness will be followed up by a phone call asking for a reason, any necessary advice will be taken.

Preventing impairment of children's overall development - If a child's holistic development needs more support in certain areas or shows cause for concern then we would seek outside advice from appropriate agencies.

All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the local safeguarding partners.

All staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to the child or young person.

We are alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.

Digital cameras used by Pathways are only used by Pathways staff and have their own memory cards. These are not given to any outside companies to print and are printed out at nursery. All images are then deleted. Parental consent to take photographs of children is obtained on admission forms.

All mobile phones are locked away and photo images are not permitted. We ask that all parents and visitors at Pathways adhere to our mobile phone policy and do not use their mobiles while on Pathways premises; this is to ensure all children are kept safeguarded.

Parents and visitors will be challenged. Children will also be asked not to use phones and these will be kept away from reach and site until they are collected by their parent/carer.

### **Children/learners you are late or go missing from education**

On occasions when children or learners are ill or are going to be late Pathways ask that parent's phone the nursery to inform us their child will not be attending. Children and learners who go missing from education, particularly those who go missing on repeat occasions, managers and staff are alert to signs that children and learners who are missing might be at risk of abuse, neglect, extremism or radicalisation.

Pathways will take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child's parent to seek an explanation for the child's absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child's parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCB procedures are followed.

If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.

### **If you suspect a child is at risk of harm.**

There may be occasions when you suspect that a child is at risk but you have no evidence. In these circumstances you should allow the child to talk. Never question anything that they say to you. Information should be fact and freely given. If the child does not disclose but you have a concern, fill out a welfare form and hand it to your lead practitioner.

There may also be occasion when you think that a child and/or parent need some extra help; this is when an Early Help Assessment Form would be completed. (See policy)

### **If a child discloses to you.**

- If a child discloses about their safety or well being you need to let them know that you must pass the information on
- During the conversation allow them to talk freely
- Give reassuring nods and words of comfort
- Under no circumstance must you question the child, unless for the purposes of clarification
- Inform the child what will happen next (age appropriate terms)
- Report the disclosure to the designated safeguarding lead practitioner filling out a record of concern form (in the child's words, not yours)
- The record will include the date and time of the observation or disclosure, the exact words of the child as far as possible, the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and the time and names of any other person present at the time.
- We will normally seek to talk to parents about a child with their parent. However if we believe that this could put the child at increased risk the designated practitioner will seek advice from social care.

## **Procedure- reporting a concern (see reporting a concern flowchart)**

### **Making a referral:**

- Internal discussion with lead practitioner
- We may make parents aware we are making a referral, unless we feel this would increase the risk to the child
- Lead practitioner will Contact First Response/Children's Social Care 0800 1313 126 or email [firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk)
- Inform them this is child protection referral
- Write up within 24 hours and inform Ofsted
- Children's Social Care acknowledge receipt of written referral within one working day
- A decision on the next course of action is made

All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve disputes between staff and organisations.

All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that an organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.

We have our own whistleblowing policy in place.

### **Children abusing their peers**

Abuse is not always due to the actions of an adult and maybe abuse from another child.

Abuse can be in many forms:

- Emotional - name calling, threatening behaviour, isolation, online bullying and derogatory name calling
- Physical - physical assault
- Sexual

Pathways works alongside parents and children to create mutual respect and an environment where children are encouraged to talk to the staff about any concerns they may have. Parents/carers are also encouraged to talk to the staff if they have any concerns or worries.

All staff understand our policy on achieving positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.

### **Confidentiality**

All staff understand that child protection issues need high levels of confidentiality, to protect the child, staff and to ensure evidence is not compromised. Staff should only be discussing concerns with the designated lead practitioner, the deputy lead or the designated trustee. These people will then decide who else needs to be informed. Safeguarding concerns do not warrant all staff knowing and only staff that need to know will be informed. Confidentiality is paramount.

Child protection information will be stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Records of concerns and information will be stored in a locked cupboard.

All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations and the circumstances under which they may share information about you and your child with other agencies.

Pathways follow Ofsted guidelines to protect children by:

- Following a rigorous recruitment policy and disciplinary policy
- Excluding all known abusers
- All new applicants for posts at Pathways are exempt from the provisions of the rehabilitation of offenders act 1974
- All staff will be DBS checked along with volunteers and students
- Appraisals are conducted once a year and suitability is reviewed throughout the year

Should any of our staff be implicated in any inappropriate activities relating to the children it will be dealt with in accordance to the disciplinary procedure.

Staff at Pathways would also follow the regulations for the independent safeguarding authority.

### **Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation**

As part of safeguarding we encourage all children, staff, volunteers and parents to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. We promote this through the activities we offer and in our everyday routine.

We are aware of the Prevent Duty and would follow all procedures under this act. The Prevent Duty is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities in the exercise of their functions "to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views displayed by the children or staff will be challenged. Information may be shared with first response and/or Staffordshire police Prevent team. We would also work alongside Staffordshire's Channel Panel in relevant circumstances. Channel is a key element of radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners, the police and the local community to identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned. All staff receive awareness raising and training in regard to preventing extremism and radicalisation.

Pathways are aware of the mandatory duty that we must report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issue, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.



It is important that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know how to act upon this and make a referral. (See the prevent referral route flowchart)

Referral Route: Staffordshire Police Prevent Team - 01785 232054

Email: [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

Helpline: 020 7340 7264

Police anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

Email: [counter.extermism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extermism@education.gsi.gov.uk)

All referrals will be reported to Ofsted (Manchester) - 0300 123 1231 (choose provider then concerns)

First Response 8.00-6.00 0800 1313 126/Outside these hours 08456042886

You can also seek advice at anytime from the NSPCC

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

At pathways we believe that all children have the right to be protected from harm and have the opportunity to thrive in a safe and caring environment.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of \_\_\_\_\_

Held on \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of the provider \_\_\_\_\_

Name of signatory \_\_\_\_\_

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director) \_\_\_\_\_