



# Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre

## Safeguarding Policy

### Policy Statement

At Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre we believe that children's needs are paramount. We promote children's rights to be strong, resilient and listened to, by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence and by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches. Staff are supported to talk freely about any concerns in the belief they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

The Governing Body and staff team at Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre are committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and we recognise that we all have a responsibility and requirement within the law, to do so. This applies to all children and families accessing services at the Centre.

This Child Protection Policy has been devised with regard to the following documentation:

- *London Child Protection Procedures (London Child Protection Committee) 5th Edition (2015)*
- *Revised Prevent Duty guidance: for England and Wales (2015)*
- *Fundamental British Values in the Early Years* ([http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/Fundamental\\_British\\_Values.pdf](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/Fundamental_British_Values.pdf)) (2015)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)*
- *FGM legislation: FGM Act (2003) amended by Serious Crime Act (2015)*
- *The Children Act 1989 and 2004.*

The documents outline a collective responsibility for child protection, maintaining the needs of the child as our guiding principle.

### Designated Professional Leads for Safeguarding

Fliss James – Nursery School

Gareth Prosser – Children's Centre

Lisa Clarke – Deputy DSL

### Safeguarding Governor

Natasha Soares – Co-opted Governor

### Safeguarding in Education Team:

Nikki Baird: 020 8820 7276

James Sykes/Simone Haynes: 020 8820 7551, email [SET@learningtrust.co.uk](mailto:SET@learningtrust.co.uk)

Hackney Children's Social Care: 020 8356 4844/5500. After 5.00 pm or at weekends ring 020 8356 2710 and ask for the "out of hours" team.

Children's Social Care are based at Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman Street, E8 1DY

## **Curriculum**

At Comet children have regular group sessions in which safety issues can be explored. This will be delivered through developmentally appropriate resources and activities such as puppets. Safeguarding issues such as 'stranger danger', saying 'No', exploring feelings and how to express themselves to known and trusted adults are talked about in sensitive ways.

## **Procedures for Staff and Volunteers**

- We ensure all staff and parents are aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures
- We provide appropriate staffing ratios to meet the needs of the children
- All staff recruitment interviews will have a member that has been trained in safer recruitment
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service before posts can be confirmed
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children
- Volunteers and students (except teaching student) do not work unsupervised at Comet
- We abide by the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act requirements* 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
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes to Comet.

## **Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- 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 person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses and reports straight to the DSL.
- The DSL will inform the key person of actions taken. The information is stored in a file and locked in the Headteacher's office.
- We refer concerns to the local authority children's social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.  
*NB: In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.*
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

## **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

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

- Listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she/he will take action.
- Ensure that when trying to ascertain information, they do not ask leading questions.
- Completes the school and centre's safeguarding alert form.

The safeguarding alert form provides 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 date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- The actions taken (no action, monitor, speak to parents, referral).
- These records are signed and dated and kept in a file which is kept securely and confidentially.

### **Making a referral**

- We keep a copy of the referral document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- All members of staff are familiar with the Safeguarding Policy and follow the 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 the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this; this will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding 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 Children's Social Care to work well together.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we 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**

We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the Centre. This is outlined in the school booklet.

- If the allegation is against the Headteacher, staff and/or parents should report to the Chair of Governors.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the Centre, or anyone working on the premises.
- We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social care department to investigate. We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where the Governing Body and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the Chair of Governors will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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 children and families throughout the process.

### **Disciplinary action**

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the Centre because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

### **Child Protection in specific circumstances:**

#### **Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM is a practice involving the partial or total removal of a girl's external genitalia or injury to the external genitalia without a justified medical or health reason. (WHO) (see appendix for further information). We recognise that there are a range of potential indicators that a girl or young woman

may be at risk of FGM. We are aware that this is a Mandatory reporting duty from October 2015. The Mandatory reporting duty requires that the professional who initially identified FGM must call 101 & social care immediately if:

- A child / young person has told you that they have had FGM done OR
- You have observed a physical sign appearing to show an individual has had FGM.

The professional:

- Record all decisions /actions
- Be prepared for officer to call you back
- Best practice is to report before next working day
- Update your local safeguarding lead

Comet Nursery School and Children's Centre is clear that extremism and radicalisation should be viewed as safeguarding concerns. We value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and both pupils/students and adults have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions.

**Extremism** is views and actions that promote:

1. violence against others
2. hatred towards others
3. undermining the rights of others.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

- From 1 July 2015 schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*". The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.
- Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate they may be in need of help or protection. In particular, staff need to be aware of any changes to parents' behaviour. As with all safeguarding concerns, staff need to use the school's safeguarding alert form and follow procedure.

## **Training**

We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved at Comet to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, neglect and sexual abuse and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. At Comet this is a continuous rolling programme of training for all staff. Staff will have access to training on:

- Safeguarding legislation and procedures
- CAF
- DSL Role
- Safer Recruitment
- Managing allegations against staff

We will ensure that the training our staff undertake contains opportunities for learning about those specific areas of child protection about which everyone working in education should be aware of and alert to.

## **Role of Governors**

- The Chair of Governors has responsibility for Child Protection.
- Regular meetings will be held with the designated safeguarding governor and DSLs to discuss Child Protection issues (monitoring role).
- The Governors have a duty to oversee policy review and ensure that the policy is put into practice.

## **Policy implementation**

- The policy will be handed to all new staff at induction.
- A register will be kept and updated yearly to show staff have read and understood contents.
- The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Chair of Governors will provide feedback at full governing body meetings.

## **Absence**

- On the child's first day of absence if we have not been contacted we will try to make contact with the parents/guardian by telephone or text to find out the reason for absence.
- If no contact can be made and there are still concerns for the child's welfare, the duty social worker should be informed.
- Further information can be found in the London Child Protection Procedures book which is kept in the Headteacher's Office.

## **Links to**

- Health and Safety Policy
- Uncollected Child Policy
- Looked after Child Policy
- DBS Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Complaints Policy

**Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effective deployment of this policy. This responsibility has been delegated to the Learning and Development Committee.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chair of Governors**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Headteacher**

**Ratified** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Date:** Summer 2017

## Appendix

### Definitions of child abuse

Child abuse is defined as:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** the persistent 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 may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure

access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Signs and symptoms**

- Unexplained bruising, marks or burns.
- Uncharacteristic behaviour, such as excessive aggression, or heightened anxiety.
- Withdrawal, isolation, and avoidance of others.
- Loss of appetite, listlessness, failure to thrive.
- Apparent unhappiness, depression, fearfulness, crying.
- Lack of trust in familiar adults.
- Onset of wetting, soiling, nightmares or sleeplessness.
- Excessive interest in adults' or others' private parts, sexual play with dolls.
- Sexual knowledge, vocabulary, touching or affection which is inappropriate.
- Genital pain or infection.
- Behaviour problems and poor concentration.