



## **31. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY (Child Protection)**

### **Statement of Intent**

Surrey Hills Forest School wants to work with children, parent/carer and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. All staff follow the Safeguarding Children Policy

### **Aims**

Our aims are to:

- create an environment which encourages children to develop a positive self-image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
- work with parent/carer to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all our children.

In the Department for Education document Working Together to Safeguard Children (April 2018), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Surrey Hills Forest School works to provide an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which there is a prompt and appropriate response to any suspicion of abuse. In order to achieve this, we will:

### **Recruit Suitable Staff**

All staff working at Surrey Hills Forest School in a paid or voluntary capacity will have been recruited using the following procedure:

- Applicants for posts within Surrey Hills Forest School are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All applicants for work within Surrey Hills Forest School, whether voluntary or paid, will be interviewed before an appointment is made and will be asked to provide two references. All references will be followed up. In the case of applicants with unexplained gaps in their employment history, or who have moved rapidly from one job to another, explanations will be sought.
- Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers are followed to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at Surrey Hills Forest School or has access to the children.
- All appointments, both paid and voluntary, will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless Surrey Hills Forest School is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children. It is a requirement in EYFS (3:11) that members of staff are



required to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- Staffing levels are appropriate to ensure the safety of the children:
- 2 - 3 years - 1 adult for every 4 children, 3 – 4 years - 1 adult for every 8 children.
- Safeguarding training provided by Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board and is accessed regularly for all adults to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Staff will refresh this training every three years with the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' update training.
- We ensure that, as part of their induction training, all members of staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns about safeguarding.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Surrey Hills Forest School is Lee Davis, with the Senior Practitioner acting as deputy. Both have attended Surrey Safeguarding Children Board's Foundation Modules 1 and 2. This training is updated every two years as DSL refresher sessions.
- A copy of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' - Summary 2015 is kept on the premises to be referred to in the event of suspected abuse.
- Surrey Hills Forest School has access to Surrey Safeguarding Children Board's procedure online at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguarding). The site is checked by the DSL for updates and amendments at the beginning of each term.

#### **Follow good practice guidelines**

- The layout of the environment and the positioning of staff at Surrey Hills Forest School allows for constant supervision.
- No child is left alone with staff or students in a one to one situation without being visible to others.
- Security measures are in place to ensure control over who comes into Surrey Hills Forest School so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- Details of all visitors to Surrey Hills Forest School are recorded.
- Children are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through adult support in making choices and in finding names for their own feelings, and acceptable ways to express them. This will enable children develop understanding of why and how to keep safe and to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Surrey Hills Forest School staff work to create a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their heritage, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background. This is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.
- Information taken from families before admission (name, date of birth, address, contact details) is updated on entry, and then updated annually, or more frequently as required. The Forest School Manager is responsible for updating and storing this information.

#### **Respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse**



Surrey Hills Forest School will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and will work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' - Summary 2015.

The abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation as well as neglect. When children are suffering from abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may become apparent through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.

Possible signs of abuse may include:

- significant changes in children's behaviour;
- deterioration in general well-being;
- unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- children's comments which give cause for concern;
- any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, or
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

Where such evidence is observed in a child's behaviour, a specific and confidential record will be set up, quite separate from the usual on-going records of children's progress and development. (Such record keeping may also be prompted by a pattern being detected in entries to the incident book, such as a child regularly arriving at Surrey Hills Forest School with specific injuries.)

The record will include:

- the address and age of the child;
- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- an objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- where possible the exact words spoken by the child;
- the names of any other person present at the time;
- the name and signature of the recorder
- should any marks be found on the child, a body map will be used in the presence of a witness

These records will be kept in a separate file, which is stored in a secure place, and will not be accessible to anyone other than the DSL, DDSL and relevant key person or others as deemed appropriate by the DSL.

### **Disclosures**

Should a child make a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff should reassure the child and let them know they are not to blame. It is important not to promise the child confidentiality as this will not be possible in the event of further investigations.

The role of staff is to listen to and support the child, but not to put words in their mouth.



Staff should take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to the child or by asking questions of the child.

Disclosure information should be recorded as above.

### **Children arriving with injuries**

- Parent/carer of children arriving at Forest School with noticeable injuries are asked the reasons for the injury.
- Staff are made aware of injuries and
- A record of where marks appear, and details about size etc are made using a named body map.
- Parent/carer are asked to sign this record

### **Informing parent / carers**

- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parent/carer/s are informed. However, if sharing information is likely to put the child at risk of significant harm, we will seek advice from the Surrey SPA team.
- If it is felt that the child will be at risk of significant harm if allowed to go home with a parent / carer, we will seek advice from the SPA team. If necessary, the police will be contacted to stop the child from leaving Surrey Hills Forest School.

### **Making Referrals**

- Referrals are made to the Surrey's Single Point of Access team on 0300 470 9100.
- Confirm referrals in writing within 48 hours, using the Request for Support Form including a body map where appropriate. Download latest version of the form from [www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguarding) and click on 'guidance for professionals'.

### **Allegations against Staff, Students, or Volunteers**

- In the event that an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of Surrey Hills Forest School staff, the individual against whom the allegation is made will be formally informed of the allegation by the Forest School Manager and immediately suspended on full pay while an investigation is carried out.
- The incident will be reported to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) on 0300 123 1650 within 24 hours, even if the member of staff resigns. The LADO will advise of the next steps to take, how to manage talking about the concerns with the adult who may have harmed the child, how to inform the child's parent/carer/carers, how the employer safeguards children throughout any investigation and what they expect of you and other agencies involved.
- A risk assessment will be carried out into how the incident occurred.
- Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). Ofsted will be notified of any action taken in respect of the allegation. It is good practice to ring Ofsted within 24 hours of the allegation being made (0300 1234 666) and to follow this up in writing no later than 14 days. It is an offence to fail to comply with this requirement.
- It is the responsibility of the Forest School Manager to gather information where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, not the DSL.



- All staff members may then be required to sign a confidentiality form, requesting that the matter is not to be discussed outside of Surrey Hills Forest School or amongst themselves at work, as they may be asked to give a statement which could later be used as evidence in Court. This is in order to protect all parties from rumour and false allegations, unintentional or otherwise.
- Any written records relating to such an incident should be kept in a secure location.
- If Surrey Hills Forest School dismisses or removes a member of staff or volunteer from working with children because they have harmed or may have harmed a child, the Forest School Manager has a legal duty to inform the DBS.
- If the member of staff resigns during an investigation or before they are dismissed, the DBS must still be informed.
- Telling the DBS does not mean the person will be automatically barred from working with children.

### **Allegations against the Forest School Manager**

- In the event that an allegation of child abuse is made against the Forest School Manager, the individual against whom the allegation is made will be formally informed of the allegation by the DDSL and immediately suspended on full pay while an investigation is carried out.
- A risk assessment must be carried out into how the incident occurred.
- The LADO will be notified within 24 hours, even if the Manager resigns. Notify Ofsted, within 24 hours, 0300 123 1650, and in writing within 14 days.
- All staff members may then be required to sign a confidentiality form, requesting that the matter is not to be discussed outside of Surrey Hills Forest School or amongst themselves at work, as they may be asked to give a statement which could later be used as evidence in Court. This is in order to protect all parties from rumour and false allegations, unintentional or otherwise.
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[www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs) [customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@dbs.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Supporting families**

Surrey Hills Forest School will take every step to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the Forest School, ensuring that the care and safety of the child remains paramount.

Where abuse at home is suspected, Surrey Hills Forest School will continue to support the child and family while investigations proceed.

### **Liaising with other agencies**

Surrey Hills Forest School will maintain contact with the Surrey SPA team who will be the official first point of contact when needed.

### **Safeguarding Priorities**



## **Prevent**

- In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the 'Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales' published by the Home Office and SSCB procedures on responding to radicalisation.
- All staff complete online Prevent training to ensure they are familiar with the protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
- We will support children within our setting to avoid radicalisation and extremism by promoting British Values in everything that we do.
- If we believe a child is at risk of radicalisation or extremism we will take the necessary action immediately following SSCB procedures.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

- All staff are aware that FGM is illegal in the UK and the mandatory duty to report cases to the police. We follow procedures set down by SSCB and guidance within the SSCB procedures manual.
- All staff complete Home Office 'Recognising and Preventing FGM' E-learning training.
- While FGM may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older siblings and young people who we may come into contact with.
- Where staff suspect a child or young person may be at risk of FGM they will in the first instance discuss their concerns with the DSL/DDSL.
- The DSL/DDSL will follow the procedures set down by SSCB.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

- Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse which involves children and young people (male and female, of a range of ethnic origins and ages, in some cases as young as 10) receiving something in exchange for sexual activity.
- Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are found in all parts of the country and are not restricted to particular ethnic groups. All staff complete 'Awareness of Child Exploitation' Level 1 training and as such are aware of the key indicators of children being sexually exploited.
- Staff understand that many children and young children who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.
- Where staff suspect a child or young person is at risk of sexual exploitation they will discuss their concerns in the first instance with the DSL/DDSL.
- The DSL/DDSL will follow procedures set down by SSCB and contact Surrey SPA team. Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm we will contact the Police.

## **Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence**

- Staff are aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or may be victims of child trafficking.
- While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, we may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who we may come into contact with.



- Where staff suspect a child or young person has been affected or at risk of forced marriage or honour-based violence they will in the first instance discuss their concerns with the DSL/DDSL.
- The DSL/DDSL will follow procedures set down by SSCB. Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm we will contact the Police.

Useful contact details are listed below:

<b>Surrey's Single Point of Access (SPA) team</b> Confirm referral in writing within 48 hours	<b>Local Area Contact Team</b> 0300 470 9100 (Mon-Fri 9-5) 01483 517898 (Out of Hours)
<b>Allegations Against Staff</b> <b>LADO (phone within 24 hours)</b>	0300 123 1650
<b>OFSTED (good practice to phone within 24 hours and compulsory to submit written report within 14 days)</b>	0300 1234 666
<b>OFSTED Whistleblowing Hotline</b> <b>OFSTED (General) Helpline</b>	0300 123 3155 0300 123 1231
Whistleblowing disclosures can also be submitted to <b>OFSTED</b> by email on <b><a href="mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk">whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk</a></b> or by post to WBHL, OFSTED, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD	
Police (non-urgent) Police (emergency)	101 999
<b>NSPCC Helpline</b> <a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>	0808 800 5000
<b>Stop It Now</b> (child sexual abuse awareness, prevention and advice organisation) <a href="http://www.stopitnow.org.uk">www.stopitnow.org.uk</a>	0808 1000 900

### Whistleblowing

- Whistleblowing is an important aspect of safeguarding where staff, volunteers and students are encouraged to share genuine concerns about a colleague's behaviour. The behaviour may not be child abuse but they may not be following the code of conduct or could be pushing the boundaries beyond normal limits.
- Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term whistleblowing generally applies when an individual witnesses misconduct that they have seen which threatens other people or children.
- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, known as the Whistleblowing Act, is intended to promote internal and regulatory disclosures and encourage workplace accountability and self-regulation. The Act protects the public interest by providing a remedy for

individuals who suffer workplace reprisal for raising a genuine concern, whether it is a concern about child safeguarding and welfare systems, financial malpractice, danger, illegality, or other wrongdoing.

- The statutory guidance from the DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, makes it clear that all settings provide services for, or work with children must have appropriate whistleblowing procedures. They must also have a culture that enables concerns about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are addressed. The concern may relate to something that is happening now, has happened in the past or could happen in the future.
- All staff, volunteers and students of Surrey Hills Forest School are aware that any concerns they may have can be shared with the Forest School Manager as appropriate. The welfare and safety of the children is paramount.
- Staff, volunteers and students who are unsure whether or not to raise a concern can contact an independent body for advice such as Public Concern at Work. Public Concern at Work is a whistleblowing charity. T: 0207404 6609. E: [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk)

**Early Help Assessment (EHA)** may be used to help identify needs. It is a holistic approach used by practitioners to assess children's additional needs within their families and wider community and decide how these should be met.

The EHA is designed to be used when;

- a practitioner is worried about how well a child or young person is progressing (e.g. concerns about their health, development, welfare, behaviour, progress in learning or any other aspect of their wellbeing)
- a child or their parent/carer, raises a concern with a practitioner
- a child's needs are unclear, or broader than the practitioner's service can address.
- The process is entirely voluntary and informed consent is mandatory, so families do not have to engage and if they do they can choose what information they want to share. Children and families should not feel stigmatised by the EHA, indeed they can ask for an EHA to be initiated.
- The EHA process is not a 'referral' process but a 'request for services'.
- The EHA should be offered to children who have additional needs to those being met by universal services. Unless a child is presenting a need, it is unlikely the EHA will be offered. The practitioner assesses needs using the EHA.

**The links to legislation are:**

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Children Act 1989, 2004, 2006
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF 1989
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
- Sex Discrimination Act (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000





- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- HM Government Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2018

**The use of mobile phones, cameras, videos, internet, and social networking sites are covered in detail in Mobile Phone and Images of Children policies.**