



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play

# Whistleblowing Policy

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## Whistleblowing Policy

### 1. Scope & Purpose

- 1.1 Croft Playgroup believes that it is unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard all children by a commitment to a practise which protects them.
- 1.2 This policy specifically covers the allegation of abuse against a child by a staff member, or volunteer. Other complaints or allegations about the setting or staff are covered by the Complaints Procedure.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees of Croft Playgroup, whether full or part time, volunteers, visitors, students and contractors.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the setting's Child Protection Policy (which states the legal framework), Complaints Procedure and Behaviour Management Policy.

### 2. Outline

- 2.1 We aim to:
  - Provide protection for the children who attend playgroup.
  - Provide staff, parents and volunteers with guidance for procedures they should adopt if they are concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff, volunteer or adult on site.
  - Provide staff with guidance for the procedure to adopt if an allegation is made about a member of staff.
  - Help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships with their families and with other adults.
  - Work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all our children.
- 2.2 We work within the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's (SSP) guidance (<https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/>).
- 2.3 We work within and follow the South West Safeguarding and Child Protection (SWCPP) Shared Procedures ([www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)).
- 2.4 We refer to Government Guidance including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2022) and 'Keeping children safe in education' (2024).
- 2.5 We have procedures for contacting the relevant authority if an allegation is made about a member of staff with regard to child protection.
- 2.6 If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the SSP's guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

### 3 Complaints

- 3.1 We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer at playgroup, which may include an allegation of abuse.



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- 3.2 We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the playgroup.
- 3.3 We follow the guidance from the Swindon Safeguarding Partnerships and the South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Shared Procedures when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- 3.4 We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

#### **4 Allegations by Others against Staff, Volunteers or Trustees**

- 4.1 The names of staff who act as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (and who deputise in their absence) are displayed on the staff board in the foyer at playgroup (please see staff list on the notice board) and there are signs around the building.
- 4.2 If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the allegation must be passed to the Designated Person or deputy in her absence. If either of these are not on site then they should be called immediately on the designated phone numbers provided (on signs in play rooms, offices and the staff room).
- 4.3 If the allegation concerns the Designated Person, the allegation should be passed to the Committee chair person and then immediately on to the Local Authority Designated Officer (see below). Details of the Committee chair can also be found on the main staff board in the foyer at playgroup.
- 4.4 The Designated Person should follow the 'Allegation Management Flowchart' (attached to this policy) and contact the Local Authority Designated Officer's (LADO) within 1 working day for consultation:
  - Swindon LADO's
  - LADO Team: 01793 463854
  - Jon Goddard: 07392103019 (Mon-Wed)
  - Rachael Hull: 07824081177 (Thurs-Fri)
  - Email: [Lado@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Lado@swindon.gov.uk)
- 4.5 An Allegation Management referral form will need to be completed and the LADO will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken
- 4.6 The LADO now sits with the quality assurance and review team
- 4.7 Ofsted must also be contacted within 48 hours and followed up in writing within 14 days.
- 4.8 If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff outside of their work with children but this may pose a risk to the children for whom they are responsible, these general principles should still be applied.

#### **5 Whistle Blowing**

- 5.1 As a setting we encourage employees to recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead, usually the Manager). If the concern relates to the Manager, they should report to the Chairperson. The Chairperson can be contacted directly via email: [committee@croftplaygroup.co.uk](mailto:committee@croftplaygroup.co.uk).
- 5.2 We ensure that staff, feel able to express their concerns without the fear of harassment, victimisation or not being believed.
- 5.3 Staff should raise concerns about unacceptable practise or behaviour as soon as possible, no



We demonstrate tolerance and respect through child-led play matter how trivial it may seem. This is to prevent the problem worsening or widening, to protect others and to prevent becoming implicated themselves. *Don't think, what if I'm wrong? – think, what if I'm right?*

- 5.4 Staff should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves or undertake any action (such as interviewing the alleged victim or witnesses, or informing the parents/carers or alleged perpetrator) that would undermine any future investigation.
- 5.5 If the allegations concern abuse against a child, the Manager or Chairperson will contact the LADO (see above) or SSP for consultation, a referral form will also be used.
- 5.6 The LADO will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken.
- 5.7 If the allegations relate to other matters, the complaint will be dealt with taking consideration of the Complaints Procedure and other relevant policies.
- 5.8 The manager has a responsibility to prevent harassment of the complainant and should keep them informed of the progress of any investigation.
- 5.9 No action against the complainant will be taken if the concern proves to be unfounded but was made in good faith.
- 5.10 However, malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- 5.11 If a child has been injured or there is clear evidence of, or risk of, significant harm, then immediate referral to the Lado, SSP, Police and Ofsted must be made and the manager/Designated Person for Child Protection informed as soon as possible afterwards. The safety and welfare of the child is the overriding concern.

## **6 Record Keeping**

- 6.1 Any member of staff or volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible, making note of what was said or seen, putting the event into context and giving the time, date and location. All records must be signed and dated.
- 6.2 All hand-written records should be kept, even if typed up later. Records of concern should be kept even where there has been no need to make an immediate referral.

## **7 Disciplinary Action**

- 7.1 Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the playgroup or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- 7.2 Ofsted and Lado are immediately informed and followed up in writing within 14 days.

## **8 Informing Parents**

- 8.1 Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- 8.2 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 SSP does not allow this.
- 8.3 In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

## **9 Confidentiality**

- 9.1 All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.



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- 9.2 Publicity should be guarded against and any information shared only under the guidance of the SSP and local information sharing protocols.
- 9.3 All records relating to child protection concerns are kept in a secure place.

## 10 Our commitment

- 10.1 Croft Playgroup staff are aware of their duty and responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed, because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

## 11 Relevant legislation and documents

11.1 The following legislation and documents form the basis of all safeguarding and child protection decisions.

- Early Years Statutory Framework Statutory Framework Jan 2024
- The Children Act 2004 and 2006
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused: advice for practitioners 2015
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- The Prevent Duty- Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers 2015

### This policy was adopted by Croft Playgroup

Signed on behalf of the Croft Playgroup

Croft Playgroup Committee

Croft Playgroup Manager

Print Name: Jason Adams

Print Name: Michelle Barrow, Helen Dearlove

Signed.....

Signed.....

Dated.....

Dated.....

*Date policy to be reviewed: June 2025 or earlier if required*