**Maine Integrated Playgroup**

**Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy**

**Principle**

**Maine Integrated Playgroup** is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children; promoting their rights and best interests.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with the legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the five main principles of the Order, the first being “the welfare of the child is paramount”.

**Policy**

Everyone at Maine Integrated Playgroup who comes into contact with children and their families have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. At Maine Playgroup management/staff/volunteers will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Maine Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, culture traditions and home background.

Maine Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.

* Maine Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
* Maine Playgroup helps children establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
* Maine Playgroup works with parents/carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

**Designated Persons – Safeguarding**

Mrs Fiona McCambridge (Playgroup Leader)

Phone: 07525128045



Mrs Ann Marie Boyd (Playgroup Assistant)

Phone: 07525128045



Gateway Team, Antrim

0300 1234 333

Mrs Claire Tinsdale – Link Social Worker, Early Years Team

Phone: 028 25635111

**Procedure**

**In accordance with Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Social Services at –Maine Integrated Playgroup we will endeavour to safeguard children by:**

**Key commitment 1**

Maine Playgroup is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

Staff/Students/Trainees and Volunteers

* Our Designated Child Protection Officer is:
* Fiona Mc Cambridge
* Our Deputy Child Protection Officer is:
* Ann Marie Boyd

At Maine Integrated Playgroup we endeavour to ensure that:

* All staff and parents/carers are made aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup provides adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the current up to date vetting procedures before posts can be confirmed. No person will be placed in a position (either paid or unpaid) which involves contact with children without being properly and effectively vetted.
* Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* The setting adheres to the Health and Social Care Trust requirements in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff/students/trainees and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* Students/trainees/volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup adheres to the relevant guidelines 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.
* Maine Playgroup has a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
* There are security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. No person under the age of 18 should collect a child unless they are the parent of the child.

**Key commitment 2**

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set out.

**Types of abuse**

**Physical abuse** - **Physical** **child** **abuse** is **physical** injury inflicted upon the **child** with cruel and/or malicious intent. **Physical** **abuse** can be the result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise harming a **child** physically.

**Neglect**- **Child** **neglect** is a form of **child** abuse and is a deficit in meeting a **child**'s basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, housing as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational and safety needs.

**Sexual-** **Sexual** **abuse** is a general term for any type of **sexual** activity inflicted on a **child** by someone with whom the **child** is acquainted.

**Exploitation**-- Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money, drugs/alcohol, gifts, affection or status.

**FGM-**Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse.

**Domestic violence** -- e**ffects** of **domestic violence** on **children**, result from witnessing **domestic violence** in a home where one of their parents are abusing the other parent, plays a tremendous role on the well-being and developmental growth of **children** witnessing the **violence**.

**Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse**

This will be done as follows:-

1. Each member of staff, trainees, or volunteers must inform the playgroup leader if they have any suspicion, no matter how slight, that a child is being abused, either at home or playgroup.
2. The playgroup leader must ensure that a detailed record is kept, of any signs or symptoms observed by asking the member of staff/ trainee/ volunteer who first noticed these to write a detailed and factual observation of what she/he has seen or heard. This must be dated and signed and a note of any action taken. It will be kept by the leader in a secure place.
3. If there is a concern about bad practice within the playgroup the member of staff involved will be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of the social services investigation.
4. If there is a concern about the playgroup leader the concern will be reported to the deputy designated officer.
5. The social services department will be informed by the playgroup leader if there is a concern of child abuse. Records will be shared with social services if the playgroup feels that adequate explanations for changes in a child’s condition have not been provided. Advice will be given to staff about what action is to be taken. This will include what discussion, if any, should take place with parents. All discussion of this nature should be recorded, dated and kept in a secure place.
6. The chairperson of the committee will be informed of the action, which has been taken. The child should not be named so that confidentiality is maintained.
7. The parents will be informed when a case is referred to social services. This will be handled in conjunction with advice from social services.
8. With the understanding that the welfare and the safety of the child is paramount, the playgroup will endeavour to support the child’s family during a child protection investigation.
9. The playgroup will work towards building trusting relationships with families involved.

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11. The playgroup leader will attend a case conference if asked to do so.

12. The child will continue to attend playgroup during a child protection investigation.

**Referral Procedure**:

Report to the Playgroup Leader.

Inform the head of the management Committee.

If after discussion, suspicion is not eliminated.

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Contact the Gateway Team, Antrim

(0300 1234 333)

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Contact the Link Social Worker, Early Years Team of Referral to Gateway

(Claire Tinsdale Tel: 028 25 635111)

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Have to hand the relevant information. Record the name of the worker taking the referral

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Record what happened.

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What you observed

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What was said.

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What action you took.

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Sign and date.

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Follow up in writing (confirmation of telephone referral to Social Services) within 24hours with a copy to the head of the management committee.

**If a concern is raised about a member of the playgroup team in relation to an issue of child protection the same procedures can be followed.**

**Contact details are:**

Central Early Years Team

Ballymena North Business Centre

120 Cushendall Road

Ballymena

BT43 6HB

Tel: 028 25635111

Link Social Worker- Claire Tinsdale

* Where a child is already known to Social Services and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

Out of Hours (Regional Emergency Social Work Service – After 5pm) 02895049999

Contact details for Gateway Team are:

Referral Gateway Team

(Single Point of Entry to Children’s Services)

0300 1234 333

**Liaison with other agencies**

* Maine Integrated Playgroup will work with the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.
* All staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup has procedures for contacting the Health and Social Care Trust on 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 the Trust to work well together.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup will notify the Health and Social Care Trust of any incident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
* If a referral is to be made to the Single Point of Entry team Maine Integrated Playgroup will 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**

* Maine Integrated Playgroup ensures that all parents know the complaints policy if they have concerns regarding the behaviour or actions of staff/students/trainees/volunteers within the setting.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup will follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff, student/trainee/volunteer within the setting, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* Management will refer any such complaint immediately to the Single Point of Entry team and the link social worker to investigate. Maine Integrated Playgroup is aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* The Management of Maine Integrated Playgroup will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Single Point of Entry team/Early Years Team.
* Where the management team and Health and Social Care Trust agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, management will suspend the member of staff/volunteer/student/trainee, 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 the children and families throughout the process.

**Disciplinary action**

* Where a member of staff/student/trainee/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, management will notify Single Point of Entry/Early Years and the Independent Safeguarding Authority of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable adults), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

**Key commitment 3**

Maine Integrated Playgroup is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout child protection training for staff. Maine Integrated Playgroup is also committed to empowering young children, through our curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

* Management will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines for making referrals.
* Management will ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
* Management will ensure that staff/volunteers are trained in Safeguarding Children/Child Protection in line with current regulations and this will be reviewed annually at staff appraisals where training needs can be identified.

**Planning**

* The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff/volunteer/students/trainees in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

**Curriculum**

* Maine Integrated Playgroup introduces 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 that they may develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup creates a culture of value and respect for every individual within the setting, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for all children.

**Confidentiality**

* All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust.

**Support to families**

* Maine Integrated Playgroup believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup makes clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Health and Social Care Trust.
* Maine Integrated Playgroup follows child protection guidelines as set out by Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the setting’s designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.

**Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCNI)**

Maine Integrated Playgroup is aware of the referral system of UNOCNI – Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. The registering social worker and the Gateway Team will keep us informed of any changes and training available.

**Links with other policies:**

Dealing with intimidating and aggressive behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Staffing Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Intimate Care Policy

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it

remains fit for purpose.

This policy was adopted by ……………………………… management team.

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………..

(on behalf of the Management Team)

Position: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Signed:…………………………………………………………………………………………

Position:………………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Reviewed on:

Date: ……………………... Signed…………………………………………..

Date: ……………………... Signed …………………………………………..

Date: ……………………... Signed:…………………………………………..