

BENBURB COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
(IN LINE WITH TRUST GUIDELINES)

PRINCIPLES

Legislation on child protection e.g. The Children Order 1995, taking into consideration the five main principles of the Order, the first being “the welfare of the child.”

POLICY STATEMENT OF INTENT

We are committed to creating a safe environment for the children which is free from abuse and where any suspicion of abuse is dealt with promptly and appropriately. We work to the guidance issued by the Southern Health and Social Services Board, who are the registering and inspecting body and will appoint designated persons to deal with Child Protection Issues in the setting. (See “Procedures for Reporting Abuse”).

PROCEDURES

In accordance with Trust guidelines, “Our Duty to Care” and “Getting it Right”, we endeavour to safeguard children by:

Excluding known abusers:

To achieve this we will ensure:

- Pre-employment interviews take place
- All appointments will be subject to satisfactory vetting by social services and the police.
- References are sought prior to employment.
- New staff are employed in line with Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996
- All appointments will be subject to a probationary period, which should be reviewed within 6 months of taking up the post.

Preventing abuse by means of good practice and safeguarding staff members

To achieve this we will ensure:

- All staff make themselves familiar with the policies and procedures for playgroup staff. Any member of staff who has any queries about this should raise them with the Leader.
- The staff and volunteers receive clear instructions on tasks and limits that apply to them as new-comers during the induction period.
- Staff and the chairperson attend regular child protection training to keep themselves abreast of their obligations with regards to instances of suspected abuse.
- Appropriate adult/child ratios will be maintained and adults will not be left alone for extended periods of time with individual children or small groups
- The layout of the room will permit constant supervision of all the children
- Appropriate activities to develop children's self-esteem with regard to self protection are provided.
- Social services are notified of any changes to the staff team.

Collection of children

The playgroup is committed to ensuring the safety of all the children in the setting and following the wishes of the person with parental consent.

“Collection information on each child should be held in written form, naming the person(s) to whom the child should/should not be released or have/not have access to during the session. This should include relevant court documents.” (Regulations and guidelines for Playgroups.)

- Children should only be collected by the person(s) named on the collection form, if parents/carers wish for someone else to collect their child they need to inform a member of staff in person or by phone.
- If a parent/carer or adult collecting a child from playgroup is suspected of being under the influence of substance abuse or alcohol, one member of staff will talk to the parent, to detain the parent. The group leader or staff member in charge must then contact the child's next legal guardian or carer.
- All nominated persons on the collection form, must be at least 16 years of age, staff are not permitted to release a child to any one under this age.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are not to be used in areas where children are present, staff will store mobile phones on a high shelf in clear view and they may only be answered in an emergency, staff have to be responsible with regards to this and must inform friends and family to only call in the case of an emergency. If they need to be contacted other than an emergency situation, they should encourage callers to contact them on the playgroup land line.

Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse

We will do this by:

Using appropriate strategies to support children who may make a disclosure of abuse. These strategies include:

- Continuous observation of the child on an ongoing basis
- Not making false promises to the child, by letting them know that you will have to tell someone
- Write all information down as soon as possible after talking to the child
- By keeping records (see “Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse”)
- Record will be kept until the child's 21st birthday due to possible legal action.
- Any concerns about a child or disclosures from a child must be reported to the Playgroup Leader immediately.

ALL INSTANCES OF SUSPECTED ABUSE MUST BE REPORTED TO SOCIAL SERVICES WHO WILL INVESTIGATE THEM.

**Other staff will be given information about these cases on a ‘need to know basis’.
CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE OBSERVED AT ALL TIMES.**

Shared Information

We will do this by:

- Sharing any concerns only with those agencies who need to know
- Involving parents and children appropriately as recommended by “Getting It Right.”

