**Policy regarding Allegations of Child Abuse against a Member of Staff**

This policy & procedure aims to:

* Ensure the welfare of the child/ren is paramount
* Ensure the rights of the member/s of staff are managed appropriately
* Ensure adherence to relevant legislation
* Involve all the correct agencies at the correct time
* Achieve consistent practice

Allegations can be received from many sources.  It is crucial that every allegation, or suspicion, is taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.  Equally, because of the many forms that child abuse can take, it is important that the correct professional advice is sought so that mistakes are not made that could be unnecessarily harmful to the member of staff.  Where the DSL in discussion with Owner/manager, is unsure whether a complaint they have received is child abuse, they will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for clear advice.

This policy is to be used alongside the Safeguarding Policy Document.

**Principles**

* These principles underpin the management of allegations against members of staff.
* The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
* It is not up to the recipient of the allegation to determine its validity.
* Members of staff should be informed of allegations against them as soon as possible, but with due regard to protecting evidence and disclosure of information.
* The decision to suspend members of staff rests with Owner/manager.
* In these circumstances, suspension is seen as a neutral action.
* Any police investigation takes priority over an internal investigation.
* Ofsted must be notified within 14 days of the allegation having been made. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

**Outline Procedure**

Any member of staff who receives a complaint of abuse, or makes a complaint of abuse, against another member of staff, must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The details of the allegation must be recorded on a Safeguarding Incident/Concern form (Allegations against Staff) in detail, signed, dated and timed. This form must be given to the DSL or deputy DSL, or if not possible they should be informed verbally, as a matter of urgency.

Procedures will follow the Safeguarding Flowchart from this point (found posted around the setting and in safeguarding policy)

The decision to suspend members of staff will be made based on advice from the LADO.  In circumstances where the investigation would be impeded, or the alleged behaviour is so serious that it could lead to dismissal, then suspension will be automatic.

If an allegation is made involving the DSL/manager, the following procedure must be followed:

Member of staff to inform the most senior member of staff. This senior member of staff must contact LADO. If the reporting member of staff is unhappy with the response from any senior member of staff, they are to contact LADO directly themselves.

*Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – 03000 410888*

Further actions will be according to the advice of the LADO and their directions.

**Ofsted must be notified within 14 days of the allegation having been made. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.**

If a member of staff is dismissed as a result of an investigation, because they have either harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm, it is the responsibility of the manager to inform the Disclosure and Barring Service, even if that employee has already left the setting.

This policy runs in line with our Safeguarding Policy.