

Collaton St Mary Community Playgroup

The Parish Rooms, Blagdon Road, Collaton St Mary, Paignton TQ3 3YA

Child Protection Policy

Collaton St Mary Playgroup fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Our policy applies to all staff, committee members and volunteers working in the playgroup.

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Supporting children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with the children, the playgroup staff are well placed to observe outward signs of abuse. The Playgroup will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that the children know that there are adults in the playgroup whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum to help children develop the skills that they need to stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Area Child Protection Committee in order to:

- Ensure we have a designated staff member for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure we have a nominated committee member responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and committee members know the name of the designated member of staff responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure that all staff, and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated staff member responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the playgroup and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the playgroup prospectus.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concern about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure that all records are kept securely, separate from the on-going records of children's progress and development, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Ensure that staff follow the procedure for child collection at the end of each session.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The playgroup may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at playgroup their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The playgroup will endeavour to support the children through:

- The playgroup promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment, which gives children a sense of being valued.
- The playgroup behaviour policy, which promotes positive behaviour and supports vulnerable children in the playgroup. The staff will ensure that the children know that some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the child such as social services.
- Ensuring that, where a child on the child protection register leaves the playgroup, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and the child's social worker is informed.

We recognise that the families of children who are abused or suspected of abuse also need support and we will endeavour to do this by:

- Building up trusting and supportive relationships between families and staff and volunteers in the group, whilst ensuring that the care and safety of the child must remains paramount.
- Where abuse at home is suspected, the playgroup will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed.

This policy was adopted by the committee at a Playgroup meeting.

Date 16th October 2007 Signed 

Review dateOctober 2008.....