**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY – Child Protection.**

(To be read in conjunction with all other Safeguarding policies)

Cowling Preschool aims to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to protect them from abuse, harm, neglect and bullying.

**Policy Statement.**

The welfare, protection and safety of children in our care is our priority and our responsibility. We are committed to following the North Yorkshire Safe Guarding Children Board and North Yorkshire Local Authority safeguarding procedures and guidance. Everyone working in our setting recognises their responsibilities towards the children in our care. We have procedures in place to follow if we suspect abuse or neglect and we are able to put the procedures into practice. We will refer to the Social Care Department when appropriate, work with other agencies, attend and provide reports for child protection conferences and contribute where appropriate to any Child Protection Plan.

Our safeguarding policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, and within guidelines set by North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children’s Board, and the ‘Every Child Matters’ Agenda.

Our commitments are;

* We will create a ‘culture of safety’ in which children are protected from abuse, harm and bullying within our setting.
* We will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns that may affect a child’s well-being or safety and work with statutory agencies as required.
* We will ensure all our staff and volunteers are fully trained to be able to recognise signs and signals of abuse and neglect, and what steps they need to follow if they have any cause for concern.

Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child protection issues is:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Child Protection – Overview.**

We ensure all staff and parents are made aware of our safe guarding policies and procedures. All our policies are available either as a printed version or on our website, www.cowlingpreschool.co.uk.

All of our staff are recruited in line with Ofsted requirements, and all hold enhanced DBS certificates which are regularly checked. We ensure we provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children. Any volunteers that work alongside our staff will also be required to hold an enhanced DBS certificate, and will never be left unsupervised with a child or group of children.

The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others wherever practicable. Where this is not practicable (toileting etc.) the supervisory adult is fully checked and qualified.

We 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, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.

We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

Any visitors to our setting have to sign in and out, using our visitors book and are never left unattended with any child or group of children. We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. The entrance to the setting is kept locked from the inside at all times during the day, and entry is only made possible via a member of staff. Children are not allowed to enter the setting, and by left by parents at the start of the day until a minimum of two members of staff are in place.

**Child Protection – Detailed.**

**Responding to suspicions of abuse.**

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
* Where such evidence is apparent, the staff member who has noted a concern makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader or manager who is acting as the ‘designated person’. The information is stored confidentially.
* We refer concerns to the local authority children’s social care department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.

NB. In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children’s Board.

* We take care not to influence outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

**Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures.**

* Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), observes signs or signals that gives causes for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising; marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff:
  + Listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
  + Does not question the child;
  + Makes a written record that firms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes;
    - The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
    - The exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
    - The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
    - The names of any other person present at the time.
  + These records are signed and dated and kept securely and confidentially.

**Making a referral to the local authority social care team.**

* We follow the guidance of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.
* **North Yorkshire Children’s Social Care can be contacted on 0845 034 9410.**

**Informing Parents.**

* Parents are normally the first point of contact.
* 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 North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform the parents.

**Liason with other agencies.**

* We work with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
* We have a copy of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority 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 social services to work well together.
* We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
* Contact details for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept**. The NSPCC helpline is 0800 800 500.**
* If a referral is made to the local authority social care department, we act within the North Yorkshire’s Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child’s parents at the same time.

**Allegations against staff.**

* We ensure all parent know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include allegation of abuse.
* We follow the guidance of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, has abused a child.
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to Ofsted and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this. The registered provider must inform Ofsted of any allegations as soon as it is reasonably practicable, but at latest within 14 days of any allegations being made. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* Where the management committee and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, 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.
* The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff is:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(Correct as at November 2016)

**Disciplinary Action**

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

**Curriculum**

* We introduce 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 develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for the individual, 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 the 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 North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

**Support to Families.**

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
* We make 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 local children’s social care team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social care worker 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 the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

**This policy was adopted on .………………………………….......**

**Date to be reviewed ...……………………………………..**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee …………………………………………**

**Name of signatory …………………………………………**

**Role of signatory (e.g. Chair/owner) …………………………………………**