



# Regent House Preschool

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## Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Regent House Preschool is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and promoting their rights.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the 5 main principles of the order the first being:

“the welfare of the child is paramount”

Prevention,

Paramountcy,

Partnership,

Protection and

Parental Responsibility.

Obligations to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare are contained in both international and domestic law, as listed at the end of this policy.

As an organisation we must be aware of how the legislation applies to Regent House Preschool when working to safeguard children.

### **Policy**

We at Regent House Preschool are committed to providing a safe environment where children are protected from harm. The staff, volunteers and students accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop an awareness of issues that may cause children harm. We will comply with Health and Social Care Trust on Child Protection and will appoint designated persons to deal with Child Protection issues, (see Procedures for Reporting Concerns).

## Procedures

In accordance with Trust guidelines (Minimum Standards for Childminding & Day-care for children under Age 12 –Version 3 October 2017), Our Duty to Care and Getting It Right, we will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

Making all staff and parents/carers aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Providing adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children.

Informing candidates of the need to carryout “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 without being properly and effectively vetted.

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.

Regent House Preschool adheres to the **Recruitment of ex-Offenders Policy**. Applicants are made aware of the Access NI Code of Practice. Applicants information is handled and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Access NI Privacy Notice <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/ani-privacy> .

Students, trainees and volunteers do not work unsupervised.

Regent House Preschool 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.

Regent House Preschool 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.

To minimise the chance of any misunderstanding the following procedure will be applied: -

If a child sustains an injury whilst in our care, we will record it in the accident book as soon as possible. When the child is collected, we will inform whoever picks the child up about the injury and ensure they also sign the accident book.

If a child arrives with an injury sustained elsewhere, we will ask for an explanation and will record this in the accident book with the explanation given.

We will try to avoid situations where an adult is left alone in a room with a child. If this does occur, we will make sure the door is left open and there are other people around, if possible.

We will avoid doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves, wherever possible.

We will ensure all adults working in the setting are aware of Regent House Preschool Code of Conduct.

Staff and volunteers will receive an induction with the Manager or Deputy Manager detailing tasks and limits placed on them, as newcomers to the setting, before working with the children.

Staff will attend child protection training and update this on a regular basis.

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 and outdoor area will permit constant supervision of the children.

Appropriate activities to develop children's self-esteem with regard to self-protection will be provided.

We will take up references, including one from the candidate's last employer, and will always question any gaps in employment history.

We encourage an open-door ethos, to enable staff to talk to the Manager and or Board of Governors or Headmaster if they have concerns about the conduct of any of their colleagues.

## **Types of Abuse**

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

Harm can be caused by:

- **Physical abuse** is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of the other person. It may involve causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse.

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include nonorganic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

- **Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

## **Responding Appropriately to Suspicions of Abuse**

All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms as listed in this policy.

We will respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse by:

- Using appropriate strategies e.g. listening to the child and not ask leading questions in order to support children who may make a disclosure of abuse.
- By observing children on a regular basis and noting any significant changes in behaviour that may give cause for concern.
- By keeping appropriate records: Making a dated record of the details of the concern (Note of Concern Form) and discuss what to do with the settings designated officer. The information will be stored securely. We understand that information and documentation may require to be transferred to relevant organisations and will do so strictly confidentially.
- By keeping a pastoral care file, logging adult/staff reported child protection issues. The pastoral care file will be kept in a locked cupboard in line with confidentiality guidelines and the Data Protection Act and public interest disclosure order.

We will keep child protection records until a child's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, in case of possible legal action. After this time the information will be disposed of appropriately. This information will be kept locked away with only designated persons able to gain access to it.

Regent House Preschool staff will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.

The designated officer will use the Note for Concern form and complete an Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) form if necessary, within 24 hours.

We will also contact our Early Years Link Social Worker/ Early Years Team Duty Officer.

Where a child is already known to Health and Social Care Trust and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

### **Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff**

Where a child makes a comment to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signals that give cause for concern, such

as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general wellbeing, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, a member of staff will:

- Listen to the child without pressing for information or asking leading questions. Will offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
- The staff member will inform the designated officer.

The responsibility rests with the individual to inform the correct persons so action is taken as soon as possible on the day that the concern is identified.

## **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

- Record real-time notes, direct speech as soon as possible
- Record on Note of Concern Forms found online or in the office.
- Make accurate record of all actions:
  - Record of name, age, date and time of observation or disclosure. Exact words spoken by the child, then names of who to report to within the setting.

These recordings are signed and dated and kept securely and confidentially.

Regent House Preschool staff members are not responsible for deciding or investigating whether or not significant harm/abuse has occurred. This is a task for statutory organisations (Gateway).

There is no absolute definition of 'significant harm', as this will be assessed on a case by case basis. **Article 50(3) of the Children Order** states that "where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child".

Where a HSCT suspects that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, the HSCT has a duty under **Article 66 of the Children Order** to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Page 13.

Gateway Service is a social work service for children and families. It is the first point of contact for people who are concerned about a child or young person not already known to social services.

Calls to Gateway are made when we have reasonable grounds for concern such as specific report from the child of an incident involving threat/physical injury or harm. Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way.

OR

If we are in any doubt over concerns, we will contact Gateway for advice and act on their advice. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from significant harm it also includes child safety, bullying, care and welfare of children and their family. We have a duty to report and can report without parental consent as the welfare of the child is paramount.

### **Calling Gateway**

The designated officer will contact Gateway. The name of the child and family will be withheld at this stage, unless Gateway ask for it.

### **Informing Parents**

Parents are normally our first point of contact.

If appropriate, we will discuss concerns with parents to gain their views on events. We will inform parents when we make a record of concern in their child's file and keep notes of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.

If concerns are discussed with Gateway and they advise us to make a referral to them, Regent House Preschool staff will make a call to parents advising them a disclosure has been made and Gateway has been contacted and they will contact the parents directly.

Parents will NOT be informed, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser.

### **Supporting families**

Regent House Preschool believes in building trust and supportive relationships with families, staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.

Regent House Preschool makes clear to parents, our roles 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.

Regent House Preschool follows child protection guidelines as set out by the Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the settings designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.

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.

### **Recruitment Policy**

Pre-Employment interviews take place and take up two references.

Access NI Disclosure and SOCARE checks are carried out as per Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.

New staff are employed in line with Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996.

References will be taken up (one of which will be current or most recent employer) prior to employment or voluntary work.

Social Services will be informed of changes to the staff team.

### **Allegations against staff**

What happens if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff at Regent House Preschool?

This procedure will be undertaken if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff.

- We ensure that all parents/carers and staff know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, including any allegations of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the settings, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.



- We refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway and our link social worker to investigate. Regent House Preschool Managers and staff are aware it is an offence not to do this.
- We will co-operate entirely with the investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland).
- Where the School Governors and Gateway agree it is appropriate, the chairperson may be advised to suspend the member of staff, whilst enquiries are carried out.
- Regent House Preschool could also invoke its disciplinary procedure.

This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff/volunteers as well as children and families whilst the investigation is being carried out.

### **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 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 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.

- Health and Social Care Trust Early Years Team must be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises. They will also be notified of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

### **Supporting Staff**

We will support all staff through the process of reporting any known or suspected abuse. We will ensure all procedures are followed through correctly and followed up if required.

### **Sharing Information**

We will do this by:

Sharing concerns only with those agencies who need to know e.g. the Gateway Team

Involving parents and children appropriately as recommended by “Getting It Right”/ “Keeping Safe Project” and information received from the Gateway Team.

Regent House Preschool’s Childcare Protection Policy comes from international and domestic legislation on child protection as listed below.

1.The Children (N.I.) Order 1995. There are main points in this order and the first states that

“the welfare of the child is paramount”.

2.Safeguarding Vulnerable groups (NI) Order 2007.

3.The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

4.The Human Rights Act (1998) – Articles 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14

5.Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (updated 29.08.17)

6. SBNI- Revised regional Care child protection Policies and procedures (15/12/17)

7.The Data Protection Act 2000

8.The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

9.Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 specifically Standard 1

10.Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Getting it Right

### **Pre-Mobile Babies**

**Definition:** A pre-mobile baby is a baby who is not yet crawling, not actively rolling as a means of mobility (including those only able to flip from back to front), not bottom shuffling, not pulling to stand, not cruising nor walking independently.

Any pre-mobile baby found to have bruising/marks (which could be due to injury) which cannot be explained by previous treatment and care provided by health professionals (including bruising/marks arising from birth trauma) should be referred immediately to a hospital based senior paediatrician for a comprehensive assessment.

Regent House Staff are aware of the protocol and that any bruising on a pre-mobile baby is to be reported to Gateway without delay.

**Our Child Protection Policy is linked to:**

1. Admissions
2. Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
3. Anti-Bullying
4. Positive Behaviour Management
5. Complaints
6. Code of Conduct
7. Confidentiality
8. Disciplinary Procedure
9. Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination
10. Health and Safety
11. Partnership with Parents
12. Staff Recruitment and Training
13. Staff Induction and Development
14. Staff Code of Conduct and Roles/ Responsibilities
15. Whistle Blowing

We always remember:

**The welfare of the child is paramount**

**Monitoring and evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the Preschool's policy review schedule.

Reviewed:

09/09/22

11/10/22

01/07/23 (Out of Hours number change)

Approved by BOG:

29/09/22

24/10/22

21/09/23

**Contact details & telephone numbers for reporting purposes:**

**RHS Preschool Registered Person in Charge & Designated Officer**

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**RHS Preschool Manager & Deputy Designated Officer**

Miss Caitlin Auld – 028 9181 3234



**RHS Preschool Deputy Manager & Deputy Designated Officer**

Mrs Tori Thompson - 028 9181 3234



**Gateway**

**0300 1000 300**

**Out of Hours**

**08001979995**

**PSNI (Non-Emergency)**

**101**

**Early Years Team**

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