

# St Marychurch Pre-school

## **Working in partnership with other agencies and professional differences Policy**

### **Statement of Intent**

St Marychurch Pre-school works in partnership with local and national agencies to promote the well-being of all children.

### **Aim**

We welcome all agencies to our setting and follow procedures contained in all policies.

### **Methods**

- We work in partnership or in conjunction with, local and national agencies to promote the well-being of children.
- Policies and procedures are in place for the sharing of information about children and families with other agencies and our found in the Record keeping and Information Sharing Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- Information shared by other agencies with us is regarded as third party information. This is also kept in confidence and not shared without consent from that agency. (see Confidential Policy).
- We welcome all practitioners from other agencies into the setting and give respect to their professional roles when working with them in partnership.
- We refer to our Child Safeguarding Policy when working in partnership with agencies.
- When practitioners visit from other agencies they do not have unsupervised access to the child they are visiting nor do they have access to any other child or children during their visit.
- Our practitioners do not casually share information or seek informal advice about any named child/family.
- Practitioners at St Marychurch Pre-school will consult with local and national agencies who offer a wealth of advice and information that help us develop understanding of issues facing us and who can provide support and information for parents. For example, ethnic/cultural organisations, drug/alcohol agencies, welfare rights advisors or organisations promoting childcare and education, or adult education.

### **Professional differences**

Our aim is to solve disagreements and decisions made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around

- Level of need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children. Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage however if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

### **Pre-escalation**

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead within the organisation to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; to be specific as to what the disagreement is about; outline any actions to date that may already or potentially impact on this decision and what they aim to achieve. They should also be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns and should to keep a record of all discussions.

**Stage one -Professional** – initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

**Stage two -Manager** – if the problem is not resolved at stage one the concerned worker should contact their manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead in the other agency/agencies as appropriate.

### **Stage three- Committee member**

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead reports to the committee chair, or named safeguarding committee member. They must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. The Committee member should also notify the Safeguarding Children Board Manager who will keep a record of all on-going disagreements.

### **Stage four – Refer via TSCB**

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel.

The panel must consist of the LSCB representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible). The panel will receive representations from those concerned in the professional differences and make a decision as to the next course of action, resolving the professional differences concerned.

**Timescales**

Some matters may be resolved very quickly and this will be determined locally by the complexity of the issues. In all cases the matter should be resolved within specified timescales and the primary focus will be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

Stage 1/2: 1 week of the issues being raised (5 working days)

Stage 3: 1 additional week of the issues not being resolved at Stage 2 (5 working days)

Stage 4: 2 additional weeks of the issues not being reached at Stage 3

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: Chairperson

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

We aim to provide a safe, stimulating, caring, happy Pre-school where all children and their families are welcome. We provide a curriculum based on the Early Years Foundation Stage using individual children's interest and needs.