

## COVID-19 Appendix to Over the Rainbow Safeguarding Children Policy (Preschool)

### Introduction

COVID-19 (commonly known as Coronavirus) has presented a huge challenge nationally to the normal running of education and childcare provision. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 all schools in the United Kingdom were closed on the advice of the UK Government to help delay the spread of the Coronavirus, and that they were only to remain open for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend. Education and child care settings are also expected to remain open to those children who are identified as vulnerable<sup>1</sup> and their needs cannot be catered for at home, or they need to attend the education/child care setting as it is a safe place.

This appendix has been prepared to explain key changes and interim measures being taken within our setting to continue to meet our safeguarding requirements during these extraordinary times.

### Status of this document

This is an appendix to the main body of our Safeguarding Children Policy and will be effective from **8 June 2020** until the setting returns to business as usual, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been formally agreed and signed off by the **Over the Rainbow Board of Trustees**.

Any questions about the contents of this document should be directed to:

Name:

Job Title: **Manager**

Email: **overtherainbow@yorkchildcare.co.uk**

Telephone: **07772079280**

### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) arrangements

It is vital that while our setting remains open a suitably trained DSL is available for consultation and advice.

The optimal scenario for our setting and one we will strive to achieve is to have a trained DSL or deputy available on site. Due to staff self-isolating, social-distancing or being physically unavailable for other reasons, it is recognised this may not always be possible, and where this is the case there are two options we will implement, the first being the preferred and second a backup option:

1. A trained DSL or deputy from the Support Service will be available to be contacted via phone or online video i.e. zoom, if they are working off site

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<sup>1</sup> Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

2. Contacting York's Early Years Quality Improvement Advisor for advice until your own trained DSL can return to work or be available.

Where a trained DSL or deputy is not on site, in addition to one of the above options, the setting will have a senior leader who will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This person will update and manage access to child protection files, liaise with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaise with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the setting.

Our DSL, deputy DSL and others with designated roles are identified in the main body of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In the event one of the above scenarios is implemented and the DSL changes, this will be communicated to staff by email.

### **Contacting the Mash Team**

Making referrals into the Mash Team will continue as usual, with referrals being made via the online referral form, and telephone consultations taking place when advice is required. Where possible the referral will be made by the DSL, however if the DSL is not available in person the senior leader who is co-ordinating safeguarding on site may be required to make the referral on behalf of the DSL after getting advice from a suitably DSL.

- Online Referral Form – <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm>
- Telephone – 01904 551900
- Email – [mash@york.gov.uk](mailto:mash@york.gov.uk)

For advice or Mash Early Help Team referral:

- Telephone - 01904 551900
- Email - [earlyhelp@york.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@york.gov.uk)

### **Contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

In the instance a referral to the LADO is necessary this will be actioned by the Manager/DSL within 1 working day of the allegation coming to light. Should they not be available then **(Deputy Manager)** will make the referral.

Contact methods for the LADO will remain the same with all LADO referrals being made via the online referral form. Consultation by phone may be necessary in which case this will be done via The Front Door (contact details above).

- Online Referral Form - <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/allegations-against-childcare-professionals-and-volunteers.htm>
- Email – [lado@york.gov.uk](mailto:lado@york.gov.uk)

## **Attendance of Vulnerable Children**

The attendance information for vulnerable children will be reported to the local authority on a weekly basis. The method for doing this is via Survey Monkey.

Vulnerable children may not be attending for other reasons including self-isolation, social-distancing or for another reason, these will be monitored by the setting and contact with the child and their family will be maintained via phone calls. When phone calls are not answered and contact cannot be established with a family, the setting will take the following measures:

- Inform the child's Social worker
- Inform the Early Years Quality Improvement Advisor

## **Children of concern who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition**

The setting may also have children about whom there are concerns, however they do not have a social worker, or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) so do not meet the criteria of a 'vulnerable' child. With these children the setting still feels that contact should be maintained to ensure safety and welfare can be monitored as best as practically possible.

## **All other Children**

While all children may not yet of returned the setting still have a duty to keep them safe, including online. The following measures have been implemented to ensure that contact with children is maintained and setting staff can maintain oversight of their welfare as best as practically possible.

- Providing updates via FaceBook and other such media
- Sharing activity ideas and tasks

If staff have any concerns about children, they will follow the standard reporting procedure outlined in the main body of our Safeguarding Children Policy.

## **Staff Training**

When the setting is open for the children or key workers or vulnerable children it will be staffed appropriately and all staff will satisfy the training requirements of 'Keeping children safe in education, September 2020<sup>2</sup>', in that they will have had copies of the following policies and had them explained to them how they operate in the setting:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> - Department for Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any their deputy/deputies)
- Part one and Annex A of Keeping children safe in education, September 2020.

In addition to the above all staff will have received appropriate safeguarding and child protection training. Further to this, all staff receive regular safeguarding updates, this is done in the following ways:

- Staff meetings
- Supervision/Appraisal
- Staff information board in staff room
- Email bulletins
- Newsletters
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Newsletter

### **Allegations against Adults working with Children**

Any staff member who works in the setting will be aware of the process for sharing concerns about colleagues or other adults who works with children in regulated activity. In our setting they will report these concerns directly to the Manager/DSL as soon as practically possible, ideally face to face, however during challenging times that may not always be possible, and a telephone call is also acceptable.

It is made clear to staff in training, induction and in our Whistleblowing Policy that they should not consult or speak of the concern/allegation with other parties, without the expressed permission of the Manager/DSL so as not to damage the integrity of any potential investigation, nor tarnish the reputation of colleagues prior to any due process.