



NORTHLEACH PLAYGROUP

Mill End, Northleach, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 3HJ

Registered Charity No. 1015852

Early Help Policy

Policy statement

The primary aim of the Early Help system is to know the benefit of Early Help as a way of supporting families and young children before their needs become acute and Social Care or other interventions may be necessary.

*Northleach Playgroup has robust safeguarding procedures in place which puts the safety of and protection of our children and families at the heart of any decisions. The Pre-school's safeguarding team consists of the Designated Lead **Lucy Harrison and Adele Reed.***

All staff complete safeguarding training every three years and refresh their safeguarding knowledge annually.

What do we mean by Early Help?

Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth to adulthood and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. It also applies to all children and young people, with any form of need, disability or concern.

Early Help requires that agencies should work together as soon as a problem emerges or a need is identified to ensure the child gets the right response, and the right services, from the right people at the right time. Our aim is to identify need early and avoid a problem escalating or the need increasing.

Early Help is provided to prevent or reduce the need for specialist interventions unless they are absolutely the correct response to meet the need and resolve the problem.

Early Help can be provided in the most complex of circumstances as well as the simplest. Early help means responding promptly if a child is at immediate risk of harm (or has other significant or complex needs) as much as it means responding to a need which only requires advice or guidance.

Procedures

Involvement of Families and Reporting concerns

If any member of staff suspects that a child may be at risk of harm, they will report the incident following the procedures of Safeguarding Children Policy.

If a member of staff believes that a child is at risk or has been subjected to significant harm, then this must be reported straight away to the DSL or the DDSL.

Our primary aim of the Early Help Policy is to try and intervene early with families before it gets to the stage when a child may be at risk of harm.

The Playgroup will always involve the family in all Early Help strategies and most will only be put in place with their permission. The Playgroup will aim to work with families in a supportive, non-judgemental way so that trust is built up and the best possible outcomes achieved.

There are occasions, however, when the Playgroup's safeguarding team or member of staff may believe that a child may be at immediate risk of significant harm and that by informing the parents/carers of the concern may put the child at further risk. In these cases, the Playgroup will implement section 47 procedures. This will involve an immediate referral to social care without the parents/carers knowledge.

Playgroup indicators for Children or Families that may require Early Help.

The following list provides examples of areas where, without intervention a family may break down or a child may be put a risk of neglect, emotional, physical or sexual harm. This also includes the risk of extremism. Northleach Playgroup has no pre-prescribed criteria for supporting children and families. Each case is assessed according to needs and a bespoke programme put in place for that child and/or family:

Low Parenting Skills

Substance/Alcohol Abuse

Domestic Abuse

Child Mental Health

Bereavement

Child Unaware of Danger and How to Keep Themselves Safe

Extremist views

Poor Diet - Obesity, Malnourished

Young Carer

Breakdown in community relationships

Adult Mental Health

Changes in Behaviour and Risk of Exclusion

Child Demonstrates Sexualised Behaviours

Low Income or Poverty

Breakdown in family relationships

Isolation

Disability of a Child

Poor Attendance and Punctuality

Frequent House or School Moves

Limited Community Integration

Transport

Special Educational Needs (refer to Local and School offer)

Disability of an Adult

Child Unaware of How to Keep Themselves Safe Online

Cleanliness and Hygiene

Staff will contact the advice line on : **01452 426644** or if an immediate concern then contact MASH on: **01452 426565**

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.) _____