

Welcome to  
Bracknell Forest  
**Children's Centres**  
"Making a difference every day"



# Parent Policies



Inside this booklet you will find information about the Children's Centres.

A full set of policies is available in the Centre,  
just ask if you would like to read them.

If you have any questions about the policies,  
please ask a member of staff.

Policies created December 2010  
Reviewed March 2013

# **“Children’s Centres are for everybody”**

## **ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY**

Bracknell Forest has children’s centres across the Borough each serving different areas. Each centre is open to every family in that local community who have children aged 0-5, whatever their gender, ethnic origin, language, culture or ability.

- All parents, carers and childminders of a child aged 0-5 are able to register with the centre if they wish. They will then receive updated information about sessions happening within the local area for families and children aged 0-5.
- Separate sessions for childminding professionals are also run to support childminders in the local area.
- Some sessions are by invitation only.
- All the sessions within the children’s centres are built around local needs. Your thoughts and comments are very welcome.
- Up to date information regarding sessions for each centre is available on the Bracknell Forest Council website (see below), by phoning your local centre or the Family Information Service on 01344 352000.

[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrenscentres](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrenscentres)

## “Making the most of your visit”

### BEHAVIOUR POLICY

By positively promoting good behaviour, valuing co-operation and a caring attitude, children's centres support all children in developing as responsible members of society and all adults in acting as positive role models.

We also aim to ensure that all adults and children treat each other with respect, dignity, equality and fairness and encourage self-discipline and consideration for each other, local surroundings and property.

- The person running the session is responsible for ensuring the smooth delivery of the session including the behaviour management of everybody present, both children and adults.
- By praising children and adults and acknowledging their positive actions and attitudes, you will ensure that children see that we value and respect them.
- If a child displays inappropriate behaviour, staff will ensure that the parent/carer is supported to deal appropriately with the incident. How a particular type of behaviour is handled will depend on the child, their stage of development and the circumstances.
- In extreme cases the child or adult might be asked to leave the room or garden until he or she has calmed down and had time to reflect on his or her behaviour. **Physical punishment will not be considered acceptable under any circumstances and may result in further action.**
- All adults, including staff, parents and carers are expected to act as positive role models. Discriminatory language and behaviour will not be accepted and will be challenged. Bullying and swearing are also unacceptable and adults who continue with anti-social or abusive behaviour will be requested to stop such actions. If they persist, the manager or member of staff in charge of the session reserves the right to ask them to leave the centre.
- Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour either by a child or adult will be recorded. Information will include the child/adult's name; the time and location of the incident; the nature of the incident; who was involved; name(s) of witnesses; signed by member of staff, witnesses and Manager.

Policy created December 2010. Reviewed March 2013

## **“Supporting mums and babies”**

### **BREASTFEEDING POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children’s Centres will support those mothers who chose to breastfeed to ensure that it is a positive experience for both mother and child and to enable them to enjoy the proven health benefits.

The children’s centres are aware of the potential problems some mothers face in breastfeeding their children. We aim to provide an environment where all mothers feel comfortable and supported when breastfeeding their children.

- Any mother, whether a member of the centre or not, is welcome to feed their baby in any centre.
- We believe that with the right information and good support, most mothers will be able to breastfeed comfortably and will produce all the milk her baby needs.
- Children’s centre staff will not discriminate against any woman in her chosen method of infant feeding and will fully support her when she has made that choice.
- To ensure that all mothers get the information and support they need to breastfeed their babies for as long as they wish, staff from the Breastfeeding Network and health services are available on different days at a range of sessions and venues across the area to offer support and advice to parents.
- This support is advertised to both parents and professionals

For more information about breastfeeding, see [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk) or <http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk>

Policy created December 2010. Reviewed March 2013

## **“Will it cost anything?”**

### **CHARGING POLICY**

It is the aim of the children's centres to make sure that their services are open to everybody. However, some services might incur a small charge in order to ensure that they continue.

The Manager will ensure that the services are available to all members of the community and has the right to waive the charge if necessary.

#### Admission

No charge will be made for admission into any children's centre.

#### Charges for children's centre services

The current charges for all services will be clearly displayed in the relevant publicity.

These charges will apply only to those sessions where substantial additional costs are incurred e.g. baby massage/yoga, messy play sessions etc.

Any other sessions will either be completely free or donations will be asked for to cover refreshment costs.

Parents will never be obliged to attend a session for which a charge is levied.

All charges will be at the discretion of the Manager.

### Remissions

The children's centre does not wish to see any child disadvantaged by virtue of the fact that his/her parent(s) are unable to pay. The Manager therefore has the discretionary right to waive fees in exceptional circumstances.

### Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions in cash or kind may be made for activities taking place. However no child is to be excluded because his/her parent(s)/carer(s) did not contribute.

It is possible, for a small number of sessions, that unless a majority of users is willing to make a contribution, the activity will not take place. Parents will be warned in advance if this is the case.

### Damage to property

The Advisory Board reserves the right to ask parents to contribute to the cost of repairs or of replacing defaced, damaged or lost property where this is a result of inappropriate behaviour.

## **“Have Your Say”**

### **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres welcome feedback from the users of the centres to ensure that the needs of the local community are being met.

#### Compliments:

- We hope that your experience of the children's centre has been a good one. We welcome feedback about our services and members of staff. If you want to compliment staff you can let us know. We will ensure your comments are passed on to individual members of staff.
- You may wish to feedback or comment on the services you have received. We welcome any suggestions for improvements. We have feedback forms available at all our sessions, or you can speak to a member of staff.

#### Complaints

- If you are unhappy with any of the services you receive through the children's centres you have the right to complain.
- If you have a concern about anything we do you can tell us by telephone, in person or in writing. Most concerns or complaints will be sorted quickly by the member of staff involved who will either deal with your issue or pass you onto someone else who is more able to help.
- You will have the right to know what use will be made of personal information, and accordingly, personal information will only be shared between staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- The children's centre has a complaints procedure (see below) and this will be followed after a complaint has been made. Please follow this procedure to ensure that

Policy created December 2010. Reviewed March 2013

your complaint is dealt with as smoothly as possible.

- We hope and aim to settle any issues at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible, the complaints procedure has four stages:

**Stage 1** - "Informal" complaint to a member of the Children's Centre team at the first point of contact. The member of staff will endeavour to resolve the complaint in a professional manner, but if it cannot be resolved then a formal complaint should be made (in writing if possible) as outlined in Stage 2.

**Stage 2** - Formal complaint to the Centre Manager (or Children's Centre Operations Manager if the complaint is against the Centre Manager), for investigation and response to the complainant.

Once we receive your complaint, we will investigate and within ten working days send you a full written reply, or let you know if our reply will take longer, explaining the reason for the delay.

If we do not hear from you within ten working days of our final reply, we will close the complaint.

**Stage 3** - Formal complaint to the Children's Centre Operations Manager (or Head of Prevention and Early Intervention if the complaint is against the Operations Manager). Any complaint of a discriminatory nature goes straight to this stage.

We hope that by now we would have resolved your complaint. However, if we haven't, you should write to the Children's Centre Operations Manager (or Head of Prevention and Early Intervention) within ten working days, asking for your complaint to be investigated further. This will then become a complaint at stage 3 of the procedure.

He/she will personally investigate your complaint or appoint another officer or senior manager who has not previously been involved, to investigate. Again, within ten working days, we will send you a full written reply, or let you know if our reply will take longer, explaining the reason for the delay.

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If we do not hear from you within ten working days of our final reply, we will close the complaint.

#### **Stage 4**

If you feel that your complaint has still not been resolved, you may write to the Head of Prevention and Early Intervention, within ten working days of the Operations Manager's reply, explaining why you are not yet satisfied. He/she will consider whether your complaint has already been dealt with properly, and if so, will write to let you know. If not, a review panel will be set up to deal with your complaint. The panel will review the findings of the Operations Manager at stage 3 of the procedure, but will not carry out further investigation. A review panel will consist of two independent people and a borough councillor and you will be invited to attend to present your complaint.

The review panel will make recommendations to the Head of Prevention and Early Intervention as to whether or not your complaint should be upheld, and if so, what remedial action, if any, the Council should take. The Head of Prevention and Early Intervention will, following consideration of the report of the review panel, make a final decision on your complaint.

As a final stage, if you are still not satisfied, you can write to the Director of Children, Young People and Learning or the Chief Executive of the Council.

For further details please also refer to Bracknell Forest Complaints procedure available on: <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/commentscomplimentsandcomplaints>

## **“What do we need to know?”**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING POLICY**

**Statement:**

Children's Centres will ensure that all information held on its staff and users will be kept confidential and will only be shared with other agencies as outlined below.

**Aim:**

**Confidentiality**

That staff and users understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times.

**Information Sharing**

That staff and users understand how and when information may be shared.

**Method:**

**Confidentiality**

Staff and users will be encouraged to maintain an ethos of confidentiality and respect for one another's privacy. Staff will maintain strict confidentiality at all times and will only share information about families as listed below.

**Privacy Notice**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres will hold personal data about the families and children that access its services and is a 'data controller' in respect of the Data Protection Act 1998. They will process the data for the following reasons:

- To ensure that Children's Centre services meet local need
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of the centres.
- To provide anonymised statistical data.
- To ensure that users' strengths & needs are adequately supported through children's centre services.

**Information Sharing**

Information may be shared between professionals providing services through the children's centres when this will be of benefit to the users and informed consent to do so has been obtained. We will make every effort to ensure that we have explained why we want to share information, with whom and for what purpose when we ask your informed consent to share information. Information may also be shared between staff and their line managers in a supervision setting where this is required to ensure adequate support for staff.

Policy created June 2010, reviewed March 2013

**The following exceptions will apply**

- If information needs to be shared without consent i.e. in the event of a Child Protection concern; to access emergency medical treatment; if there is suspicion of criminal activity or a crime has been committed; if a Court orders information has to be shared.
- Where case studies are used, details will be changed to protect the identities of the people involved. However, permission will be sought wherever possible.
- Where permission has already been obtained from the people concerned to share information. In the case of young children, parental or legal guardian's consent will be obtained. Any limitations to consent will be clearly noted and respected and consent agreement will be periodically reviewed to check that there have been no changes.

Information will be kept in a secure place. In the case of paper documentation this will be held in lockable storage. Electronic information will be held on password protected computers/servers. Users will have access to the information held about them as per the Data Protection Act. They will not have access to information about any other users of the centre. Consent to share information can be withdrawn at any time, but this may limit the support that can be offered.

## **“Keeping in touch”**

### **CONTACT DETAILS POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres are committed to ensuring that the personal details of all children, families and staff are up to date. This will ensure that emergency contact details are current and that anonymised data can be used to confirm that the users of the centre reflect the local community.

#### **Contact Details for Families/Carers**

Up-to-date details will be collected and recorded for each member (adult and child) of the children's centre including (as a minimum) name; address; telephone number; mobile number; email address; emergency contact numbers; date of birth and ethnicity. This will be in line with current Data Protection legislation.

Reminders will be included on publicity to encourage parents to update any changes in details and details will be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### **Publicity**

All publicity will contain contact details of the children's centres or the telephone number of the Bracknell Forest Family Information Service as a central contact point.

#### **Registers**

You will be asked to sign in when you attend any session run by the children's centre.

#### **Visitors**

All external visitors will be asked to sign in on arrival at the centre and sign out when they leave.

## **“Keeping Safe”**

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY**

Domestic abuse can happen to anybody regardless of social group, race, culture, sexuality or ability. It can happen to staff or users of a children's centre, female or male and occurs within all types of relationships. Domestic abuse is always unacceptable and requires a multi-agency approach in supporting those affected.

If you talk to a member of staff and tell them that you have experienced domestic abuse, they will react according to the following guidelines:

- Priority will be given to ensuring your immediate safety and any children involved.
- Staff will recognise your need for a positive response and offer support.
- Staff will take you seriously and believe you.
- Staff will reassure you that the violence is not your fault.
- Staff will let you know that you are not alone in being abused.
- Staff will be sensitive to and discuss your fears.
- Staff will appreciate that your options may be limited by lack of resources or access to resources.
- Staff will check if it is alright to send letters or to phone you at home and recognise that confidentiality is crucial.
- Staff will respect your wishes if you do not want to be contacted at all.
- Staff will give you information and phone numbers to take away with you.
- Staff will discuss the situation and options open to you and find out what other agencies have to offer and let you know.
- Staff may help you explore ways of maximising your safety whether you leave or not.
- Staff may need to report what you have told them depending on the circumstances, but they will always discuss this with you.

The victim in domestic abuse is normally female, however, the above procedures would apply to both women and men.

See overleaf for details of organisations who can offer support.

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Organisation	Description of Services	Useful Information
<b>Social and health care</b>	Children's Social Care Adult Social Care Community Mental Health Team Emergency Duty Team (24 hours)	Tel: 01344 352020 Tel: 01344 351500 Tel: 01344 823333  Tel: 01344 786543
<b>Benefits</b>	Family Information Service  Shelter  Citizens Advice Bureau	Tel: 01344 352000  Tel: 0808 800 4444  Tel: 0844 499 4107
<b>Police</b>	Police Domestic Violence Unit  Police	Tel: 101  Tel: 999 in an emergency or 101 for non emergency calls.
<b>Victim support and outreach</b>	Victim Support  Berkshire Women's Aid  National Domestic Violence Helpline  Sahara Asian Women's Project, Reading  National Centre for Domestic Violence (Thames Valley) for free legal advice	Tel: 01344 309388  Tel: 01189 504003  Tel: 0808 2000 247  Via BWA Tel: 0118 9504003  0800 9702070

## **“A friendly welcome for everyone”**

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all children and families. Anti-discriminatory practice will be followed by all staff.

The children's centres are open to all members of the community caring for a child under the age of five years.

To ensure that as many people as possible use the services of the children's centres:

- The services are advertised widely through public media, community groups and venues and professionals working with families and carers.
- Publicity and promotional materials will reflect the diversity of the local community.
- Information will be presented in clear, concise language.
- Centres will try to identify members of the community who aren't able to access the centre easily and they will be given help to attend services or will be visited in their own homes.

When working with families and children, the children's centres will:

- Make children and adults feel valued and good about themselves, and enable carers to do the same.
- Ensure all children and adults have equality of access to the facilities and activities.
- Reflect the widest possible range of backgrounds in the choice of resources.
- Avoid stereotypical or insulting images in displays, resources or materials.
- Create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance.
- Accept no discriminatory behaviour or remarks from any users of the centres (see Behaviour Policy).
- Support children, families and carers who have English as an additional language.
- Ensure children, families and carers who have additional needs and/or disabilities are fully included in the centres.

The children's centres will endeavour to meet medical, cultural and dietary needs when providing food.

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Meetings will be arranged to ensure those users who wish to contribute to the running of the children's centres are able to attend (i.e. through parents' forums and an Advisory Board). Reasonable expenses will be offered to enable all users to attend such meetings. Information about these meetings will be communicated verbally and through writing.

There will be on-going monitoring and evaluation of centre activities and those families who access them to ensure that the needs of the local community are met and that users of the centres reflect their local communities.

To ensure that equality of opportunity is applied to recruitment of staff, Bracknell Forest Council's recruitment process and Equal Opportunities Policy are adhered to.

## **“Safe and sound”**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

Children's Centres will take all reasonable steps to create a safe working environment and ensure safe working practices.

Parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times when attending the children's centre's services unless the children are in a crèche provided by the centre. Children will then be cared for by suitable staff.

Users and staff will be kept safe through the following methods:

#### Environment

- All toys and equipment will be clean and safe.
- Outside play equipment will be stored appropriately and checked before use.
- Craft materials must be appropriate. Small or sharp objects that could be swallowed will be avoided where babies or toddlers are present.
- Staff and users should not cause hazards e.g. do not leave cupboards or doors open, litter on the floor, trailing leads etc.
- Floors will be kept clean and all spillages will be wiped up immediately.
- All exit gates will be securely closed during sessions.
- Parents/carers and children will be encouraged to be aware of safe behaviour. Notices will be displayed during family sessions to remind adults of their responsibilities regarding the supervision of their children, hot drinks etc.
- Barriers will be in place as necessary to prevent access to unsafe areas and will be securely fixed and properly used.
- All cleaning materials will be stored in a lockable cupboard.

If you notice anything in the centre that might be a hazard, please tell a member of staff.

#### Health and Hygiene

- Smoking is not permitted in the children's centre building or outside when on a school site.

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Policy created December 2010. Reviewed March 2013

- Parents/carers are requested not to bring children into the centre if they are unwell. (See Sickness Policy)
- Toilets and washbasins will be cleaned daily and more frequently if required.
- If nappy disposal facilities are not provided, parents will be requested to take dirty nappies home for disposal.

#### Recording of Accidents, Incidents and Violence

- All accidents/incidents will be recorded in the Accident Book which is held in the centre office.

#### First Aid

- The First Aid box will be easily accessible but not within children's reach. Notices stating the location of the First Aid box and the names of staff competent to act as first aiders will be clearly displayed.
- First Aid boxes are taken to outreach venues.

#### Fire Safety and Emergency Procedure

- Fire and Emergency evacuation drills must be carried out at least once a term and will be supervised and monitored by the centre manager. Fire notices with concise details of emergency procedures will be prominently displayed. Emergency evacuation procedures will be explained to all users of the centre and to every new member of staff as part of their induction.
- All fire equipment is checked annually by a competent contractor.
- The Critical Incident Policy will cover the sounding of the Broadmoor siren as well as any other major incident.

## **“Food for thought”**

### **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

The Children's Centres wish to promote healthy lifestyles for children and adults through the provision of appropriate snacks and advice and the opportunity to prepare healthy food.

Families will be encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. This will be through advice given within the centre and also in the training kitchen. Healthy eating posters will also be prominently displayed within the centre.

The staff will support parents/carers and their children to:

- Understand what is a healthy, balanced diet.
- Experience a wide range of healthy foods.
- Cook and prepare healthy meals.
- Prepare healthy meals on a restricted budget.

Snacks provided for children follow NHS guidelines on healthy eating i.e. they are free from teeth damaging sugars and low in salt. Highly processed foods and those with artificial additives are also avoided. Snacks are usually fresh fruit but vegetables, bread sticks and crackers are also provided.

To ensure the safety of all users with allergies and to support healthy eating, parents/carers will not be permitted to bring in personal food or drink unless agreed beforehand by the centre staff.

During the sessions only milk and water will be on offer to children. Drinks for children over the age of one will be provided in cups or in cups with health visitor approved lids.

All healthy dietary requirements will be catered for where possible, regardless of whether they are for health/allergy reasons, cultural/religious reasons or personal beliefs.

## **“Baby change”**

### **INTIMATE AND PERSONAL CARE POLICY**

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out a procedure (such as cleaning up after a child who has soiled or wet themselves) to intimate personal areas. This also includes taking a child to the toilet.

Children’s centre staff would **not** normally be required to undertake such tasks as parents are responsible for their children whilst visiting the centre.

However, if a parent has more than one child with them and one needs intimate personal care or needs to use the toilet, children’s centre staff may offer support to the parent. In this case the parent or carer should take responsibility for the intimate care or toileting and staff should supervise the other child/children.

All Children’s centre staff will have enhanced DBS (CRB) checks.

## **“Out and about”**

### **OUTINGS AND TRIPS POLICY**

Children’s centres wish to provide safe opportunities for parents/carers and their children to visit both local and national places of interest with the Children’s Centre team.

To ensure this happens safely, the following will apply:

- As with all children’s centre activities, parents are responsible for their children at all times.
- Parents and carers will be asked to complete a booking form and sign to acknowledge that they are aware of the point above.
- Parents who attend the trip should not drink alcohol nor take non-medical drugs. Should a parent appear to be unable to care for their child/ren or be perceived to be a danger to other people on the trip, the manager will have the discretion to take appropriate action.
- A Risk Assessment will be carried out by the staff prior to the visit and reviewed before any subsequent visit, even if it is to the same place.
- A designated and qualified first aider will always be in attendance.
- A nominated member of staff will be the outings lead officer. They will be responsible for ensuring registers and emergency contact details for all staff and families are taken on the outing.
- Only appropriate transport with the correct insurance, seat belts etc. will be used on any outing or trip.
- Parents will be responsible for ensuring that their child/ren use appropriate child restraints during the journey.

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## **“Working together”**

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres believe that children thrive and achieve their potential when all partners (parents and professionals) work together. We believe parental involvement leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

- Information for parents/carers about the activities available within the centre will be available in a range of different formats and be accessible to all. Staff will take responsibility for ensuring alternative methods of communication are available to support parents who may not understand the written format.
- Parents/carers will be supported in addressing any issues that they might have and be signposted to other professionals where appropriate.
- Regular consultation events and the recording of informal feedback will inform the development of new services and the evaluation and review of existing ones.
- The importance of parent attendance at the Parent Forums will be explained and parents will be encouraged to participate.
- Parent representation on the Advisory Boards for each centre is actively encouraged.
- Parents will be supported if they wish to volunteer and opportunities for further training are available as a volunteer.
- Details of the centres' Compliments and Complaints Procedure are available in each centre and at outreach sessions.
- Full policies and procedures are available in each centre and each user of the centre is given an abbreviated set of policies at registration.

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**“Smile!”**

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND USE OF IMAGES POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres believe that parents/carers have the right to choose whether photographs are taken of their child/ren when they are attending children's centre sessions. We aim to safeguard all children and adults who attend the children's centres and will ensure that no photographs are taken or used at a later date without the consent of the parent/carer.

- All parents/carers will be asked to sign a photography permission statement which will state the purpose of the photographs and their storage and use. Parents/carers have the right to withdraw that permission at any time.
- Parents will be asked not to take photographs (either on cameras or mobile phones) during centre sessions. Each centre has its own camera and staff will be willing to take photographs on behalf of the parent/carer. In these circumstances, staff will only take photographs of the individual child/ren of parents/carers and will not include other children in the photograph without adult consent.
- Official photographers who attend centre sessions representing either the Council or the press will be required to gain permission from the responsible adult before taking a photograph.
- If it is known in advance that an official photographer will be present at a centre session, parents/carers will be notified.
- Photographs taken with parental permission might be used to publicise the children's centres and published in a variety of media including flyers/posters; websites; Facebook community pages etc. and specific agreement will be gained from parents for this use.
- Details of the centres' compliments and complaints procedure are available in each centre and at outreach sessions and parents/carers can use this process to make a complaint about the inappropriate taking of photographs.

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## **“Take care of me!”**

### **PROCEDURE FOR LOST OR ABANDONED CHILDREN**

Children's Centres will take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are kept safe and will ensure that all parents are aware of their responsibilities to their children when attending a children's centre

Parents/carers are responsible for their children at all times when attending the children's centre's services unless the children are in a crèche provided by the centre. Children will then be cared for by suitable staff.

If a child is abandoned at a children's centre session i.e. the parent/carer leaves the premises, the following procedure will be followed:

- The telephone numbers on the registration form will be called.
- These telephone numbers will be continually called for the next 30 minutes.
- If after this time contact has not been made with any responsible adult, the Children and Families Team at Children's Social Care will be contacted and asked for advice which may involve ringing the Police.
- If a parent returns within 30 minutes, the reason for their absence will need to be discussed with the centre manager.
- Any safeguarding concerns will be referred to Children's Social Care.

If a child is found to be lost, the following procedure will be implemented:

- An immediate search will be made by centre staff whilst maintaining a staff presence with the other families to provide reassurance.
- The police, Local Authority (Head of Prevention and Early Intervention) and school (where appropriate) will be informed.
- Guidance will be taken from the Police once they have attended the incident.

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## **“Keeping safe”**

### **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

All organisations that work with children share a responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people.

The relevant procedures according to the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures will be followed if any form of abuse is suspected but you should talk to the Centre Manager if you have any concerns and they will support you in taking the appropriate action.

Referrals must always be made to Children’s Social Care if there are signs that a child under the age of 18 years, or an unborn baby:

- Is suffering or has suffered abuse and/or neglect
- Is likely to suffer abuse and/or neglect
- If bruising is observed on an immobile baby
- (With agreement of a person with parental responsibility) would be likely to benefit from family support services.

The following principles are key for all staff and parents:

- The interests of the child are more important than anything else.
- In cases of suspected child abuse all staff have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in the agreed procedures.
- Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.
- Investigation is the responsibility of the relevant Children’s Social Care Department and the Police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential difficult effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
- Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents will be kept to the standards outlined in the agency’s recording procedures.
- This procedure also covers disclosures made in electronic communications (e-mail or text messaging).

**What to do if a child tells you or somebody else that they are being abused:**

If a child tells you or a member of staff that they or somebody they know is being abused, you should:

- Believe what the child is saying and take it seriously.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- Give the child time to talk and not ask any further questions about what has happened. This will be done by a Social Worker or Policeman.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. All allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon.
- Explain to the child that you will share this information with a senior member of staff who will ensure the appropriate procedures will be followed.
- Record the event as soon as you can by writing down everything you can remember exactly as it happened.
- If you cannot talk to a member of staff, you should contact Children's Social Care (01344 352020) as soon as possible to ask advice or make a referral.

**What to do if you are concerned about an adult's behaviour:**

If an adult (staff or user of a centre) has any concerns about the behaviour of another adult towards children or young people, the following procedures will apply:

- You should not ignore the situation
- Talk to the Centre Manager about your concerns
- If you don't feel able to discuss the matter with the Centre Manager, please phone Children's Social Care (01344 352020) or the Prevention and Early Intervention office (01344 354024)
- Action will be taken according to the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.

**Allegations against any employee or volunteer working for the Children's Centre:**

If an allegation is made, or a concern arises, about a member of staff or volunteer, actions will be taken following the detailed guidance in the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures.

**What to do if an adult tells you that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person:**

If someone not employed by the children's centre discloses that they are involved in the abuse of a child or young person, YOU MUST TAKE ACTION:

- Believe what they are saying and take the allegation seriously.
- Record details of what you have been told as soon as possible.
- Tell a senior member of the children's centre staff
- If for any reason you cannot do this, then you must directly contact either Children's Social Care or the Police.

**Staff Conduct**

Staff will act as role models at all times and maintain appropriate professional relationships with a child or vulnerable adult.

**Training**

All staff and volunteers will ensure that they attend child protection training in accordance with the requirements and standards of their agency.

**Recruitment and Selection of staff and volunteers**

Advertisement of posts and application packs will make reference to the commitment of the organisation to Safeguarding, including the intention to seek enhanced DBS (CRB) disclosures.

**E-Safety**

Children and young people can be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse through the medium of Information Technology. Staff will support parents/carers in accessing relevant information to enable them to protect their children appropriately.

## **“Not feeling very well?”**

### **SICKNESS POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres will promote good practices to minimise any potential spread of infection amongst users and staff of the centres.

- Parents will be provided with a leaflet giving information about good hygiene practice and sickness exclusion periods and will be asked to adhere to the guidelines contained within the leaflet.
- Should a child appear to be unwell, the manager will have to consider the needs of other users of the centre and may request the parent/carer to care for their child at home.
- Staff will support parents/carers and children who become ill whilst attending the centre and will respond appropriately to the individual circumstances.
- Emergency contact details for all users of the centres will be kept up to date in case a user of the centre or a member of staff is taken ill during a session (see also Contact Details Policy).
- Relevant posters will be displayed in each centre.
- There will always be a qualified First Aider present during every session.

## **“Keeping healthy and safe”**

### **SMOKING, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

Bracknell Forest Children's Centres are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and environment for all children and families and will support parents/carers who wish to give up smoking, alcohol or drugs by signposting them to the appropriate services.

#### **Smoking**

The Children's Centres and associated outreach sessions are no smoking environments and signs are displayed to this effect. Any adults (including staff) who wish to smoke must leave the premises, and in the case of children's centres on school sites, the grounds of the school. Parents who leave the premises in order to smoke must ensure that their child/ren are safe and secure in the charge of another adult and understand that children's centre staff cannot be responsible for the child/ren's care at this time.

Anybody who attempts to smoke in a children's centre or outreach venue will be asked to leave the premises as it is illegal to smoke in an enclosed public area.

#### **Alcohol**

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on children's centre sites and associated outreach venues. The only exception to this rule is for specific occasions when children will not be present e.g. a social function. However, the rules and regulations of co-located sites will be respected.

#### **Drugs**

The consumption of illegal drugs is not permitted on children's centre sites and associated outreach venues at any time.

Any parent/carer who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be supported in caring for their child. However, if it is considered that the child/ren are at risk then safeguarding procedures will be followed and Children's Social Care will be contacted.

If a parent/carer chooses to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, staff will advise them that it is unwise to do so and that the Police will be contacted to ensure the safety of any children and other members of the public.

If any illegal drugs and/or drug taking equipment are found on children's centre premises or outreach venues, the area will be made safe and the Police will be contacted.

Policy created December 2010. Reviewed March 2013