



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION

At Squirrels we are committed to the protection of all children in our care. We provide a friendly, caring and safe setting for all our children so that they can learn through play in a relaxed and secure, home from home environment. We believe every child should be able to enjoy all our fun activities and feel protected from harm. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our children by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Safer Recruitment

When recruiting new staff, we have a clear process in place to reduce the risk from individuals who pose a threat to children and young people in our care.

When advertising we make it clear that we are committed to safeguarding and protecting children.

Interviews are conducted face to face with prepared questions relevant to the post they are applying for.

Included in the questions is a question about any criminal convictions and their suitability to work with children.

To check identity, it is requested that applicants bring along photographic ID, proof of address, the contact details of two referees and a copy of their DBS. The DBS would be renewed on employment though.

Relevant qualifications would be checked and photo copies obtained.

Staff and volunteers

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer who co-ordinates child protection issues is **Sam Shimmin**. She can be contacted on **01606 888782 or 07885 243686** and shares all training and updates with all members of staff.

The Deputy Safeguarding lead is **Geri Dowdall** available on **01606 888782**. All Local Authority Safeguarding services are listed at the end of this policy.

All staff undertake regular Safeguarding courses in order to have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

All staff are aware of how to access information relating to child protection via the LSCB website.

Parents are given the relevant telephone numbers and information in the Policy Document given to them on enrolment.

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

Applicants for posts within Squirrels are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Candidates are required to hold enhanced DBS certificates prior to being employed. These are renewed on accepting employment with us.

Where applications are rejected because of obtaining information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and challenge incorrect information.

Squirrels abides by Ofsted requirements in respect of DBS checks for staff and volunteers.

Volunteers do not work with the children unsupervised.

All staff qualifications, certificates and identity checks are completed, filed and updated when necessary.

All staff sign and date a Personal Circumstances and Health Declaration every term and are expected to disclose any circumstances, convictions, cautions or court orders which may affect their suitability to work with children.

We have procedures for allowing any visitors into Squirrels and have a Code of Conduct for all visitors to read.

No unauthorised person would have unsupervised access of the children.

Our parents sign a consent form regarding photographs either to record their child's development or for promotional reasons. A list of any child who is not be photographed is displayed in the office.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

Any of these forms of abuse can be demonstrated by –

- significant changes in their behaviour
- deterioration in their general well-being
- comments may cause concern (direct or indirect disclosure)
- changes in appearance, play or behaviour
- unexplained bruising or marks

Squirrels would take into account any issues which may lead to compromised care. For instance, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or a parent's disability or domestic violence.

We are aware of other factors that may affect children's vulnerability such as the abuse of disabled children, fabricated or induced illness, sexual exploitation of children and Female Genital Mutilation. **(More detailed signs and symptoms of all forms of abuse can be found on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board website on: www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk/professionals/)**

Staff at Squirrels are aware that some children and young people can be affected by gang activity, organised abuse, forced marriage or honour based violence. Although this is unlikely to affect young children in our care, it may affect older children they come into contact with in their home environment.

If a child at Squirrels is believed to be affected by any of these factors we would follow the procedures below for reporting child protection issues.

If such evidence was apparent the child's key worker would keep detailed records of the concerns and

discuss this with the designated safety lead. All information would be filed securely in the locked filing cabinet in the office, in the child's personal file.

Any concerns would be referred to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The **I-ART (Integrated Access and Referral Team)** team can be contacted on **0300 123 7047** or for **emergency out of hours 01244 977277** or by contacting the **Police on 0845 458 0000** (999 in emergency).

We would ensure we did not influence the outcome of any investigation either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of the children.

Young people (aged 16-19) who may be here as students or on work placement would be protected by the Children's Act 1989. Any abuse suspected would be reported by the same procedure as any child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of sharing it.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

If any of the aforementioned signs of abuse were noted by staff i.e. significant changes in behaviour, unexplained bruising, deterioration in well being or any signs of abuse or neglect – the member of staff would –

- listen to the child, offer reassurance and say what action will be taken to help them feel secure
- would not ask any leading questions to the child

- makes a written account/record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure, use the exact words the child used as far as possible, the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, the date and time and names of any other persons present at the time.
- this record would be signed and dated and kept securely in the child's personal file
- the designated lead would be informed of the issues at the earliest opportunity or, if absent that day, the deputy.
- Once the LSCB has been contacted their procedures will be followed
- The LSCB's "Safeguarding Children Induction Booklet" is used and all staff are aware of its contents

Informing parents

Parents would normally be the first point of contact to discuss any concerns to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.

If suspicion of abuse warrants referral to I-ART parents would be informed at the same time as the referral is made unless advised otherwise by I-ART whereby it could place the child in greater danger. This would be the case if the parent was the likely abuser. In this case the parents would be informed by the Authority.

Liaison with other agencies

Squirrels works within the LSBC guidelines. There is a copy of “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” available for parents and staff and we ensure that all staff are familiar with the publication as well as having access to the LSBC on-line.

Ofsted would be notified of any incident or accident or changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed at our setting or elsewhere). Such notification should be made as soon as reasonably practical, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Allegations against staff

Squirrels informs parents how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting.

Inappropriate behaviour could include –

- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the usual role and responsibilities
- Inappropriate sharing of images

The LSBC guidelines in such a situation would be to contact **LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) on 0151 511 7174**

Any such incident would immediately be reported to Ofsted.

We would co-operate with any investigation carried out by LADO and in conjunction with the Police.

In most instances the member of staff would be suspended until an investigation had taken place. This

would be decided by the Chair and Management and on the advice of LSBC. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the staff, as well as the children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

If a member of staff is dismissed due to engaging in activities that cause concern for the safeguarding of children, we will notify the **Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)**, so that individuals who pose a threat to children can be identified and barred from working in these groups.

Training

Squirrels endeavours to send staff to training opportunities to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of abuse. The lead safeguard will always pass on knowledge and keep updated of any change to the guidelines.

We include Safeguarding questions in the regular staff appraisals as well as at staff meetings.

All staff are aware of the LSBC website and can access this at any time.

Planning

The layout of Squirrels allows for constant supervision. Children are always within sight and sound of a member of staff and are never left alone with a volunteer.

Curriculum

Children are helped to develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe by incorporating key elements of keeping safe in the planning for Personal, social and emotional development.

At Squirrels we promote British Values as defined by Democracy, Individual Liberty, Mutual respect and tolerance and The Rule of Law.

We also value and respect the culture of all children and families while celebrating all heritages and social backgrounds.

Support to families

At Squirrels we believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.

Our responsibilities in relation to child protection and reporting concerns are made clear to the parents on enrolment.

We would continue to welcome the child and family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse. We would take the advice of the LSBC in supporting that child and family.

Signed on behalf of the Provider

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Name of signatory

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Written by SS on 10/2/19

Role of signatory

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