



Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy

Principle

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children; promoting their rights and best interests.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with the legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the five main principles of the Order, the first being "the welfare of the child is paramount".

Policy

Everyone at Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup who comes into contact with children and their families have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. At Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup management/staff/volunteers will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural, traditions and home background.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup helps children establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup works with parents/carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will inform the Southern Health and Care Trust of any allegations of abuse by a member of staff/volunteer or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises.



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Procedure

In accordance with Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Social Services at Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup we will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Key commitment 1

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

Staff/Students/Trainees and Volunteers

- Our Designated Child Protection Officer is: Joanne Heatherington (02885567411) or (07917485942)
- Our Deputy Child Protection Officer is: Ruth Magowan (07917485942)

At Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup we endeavour to ensure that:

- All staff and parents/carers are made aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup provides adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the current up to date vetting procedures before posts can be confirmed. No person will be placed in a position (either paid or unpaid) which involves contact with children without being properly and effectively vetted.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- The setting adheres to the Health and Social Care Trust requirements in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff/students/trainees and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Students/trainees/volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup adheres to the relevant guidelines in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns



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in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup has a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- There are security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Key commitment 2

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set out.

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key worker/staff member makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
- Those involved will take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

The management team will use detailed procedures and reporting format when making a referral to Gateway.

- Contact Early Years Link Social Worker/Early Years Team.
- Where a child is already known to Social Services and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

Contact details are: Joanne Heatherington (02885567411) or (07917485942), Ruth Magowan (07917485942) and Gateway (Southern Trust) on Tel: (0800 783 7745) or (02837415285), Regional Social Work Services if outside normal working hours (02895049999).



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Recording suspicions of abuse

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, a member of staff will:

- Listen to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
- Not question the child.
- Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
 - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time;
 - the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.

Making a referral to Gateway

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will follow any procedures that the Gateway team has in place.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will also inform our link social worker that we have made a referral to the Gateway team.
- Where the child already has a social worker, Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will contact them directly.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will retain a copy of any forms filled in for Gateway in the child's personal file.
- All staff are aware of the referral procedures for recording and reporting.

Contact details for Gateway Team are: Tel: 0800 783 7745 or 0283741285.

If outside normal working hours then contact can be made with Regional Social Work Service on 028 95049999.



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Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where guidance does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officer will inform parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will work with the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.
- All staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup has procedures for contacting the Health and Social Care Trust on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and the Trust to work well together.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will notify the Health and Social Care Trust of any incident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
- If a referral is to be made to the Gateway team, Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Allegations against staff

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup ensures that all parents know the complaints policy if they have concerns regarding the behaviour or actions of staff/students/trainees/volunteers within the setting.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff, student/trainee/volunteer within the setting, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.



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- Management will refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway team and the link social worker to investigate. Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is aware that it is an offence not to do this.
- The Management of Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Gateway team/Early Years Team.
- Where the management team and Health and Social Care Trust agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, management will suspend the member of staff/volunteer/student/trainee, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff/student/trainee/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, management will notify Gateway/Early Years and the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable adults), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

Key commitment 3

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues through child protection training for staff. Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is also committed to empowering young children, through our curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Training

- Management will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines for making referrals.
- Management will ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
- Management will ensure that staff/volunteers are trained in Safeguarding Children/Child Protection in line with current regulations



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and this will be reviewed annually at staff appraisals where training needs can be identified.

Planning

- The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff/volunteer/students/trainees in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup introduces key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they may develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup creates a culture of value and respect for every individual within the setting, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for all children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust.

Support to families

- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families/ staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.
- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup makes clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Health and Social Care Trust.



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- Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup follows child protection guidelines as set out by Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.

Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI)

Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup is aware of the referral system of UNOCINI - Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. The registering social worker and the Gateway Team will keep us informed of any changes and training available.

Contact details are Joanne Heatherington (02885567411) or (07917485942), Ruth Magowan (07917485942) and Gateway on Tel: (0800 783 7745) or (02837415285), Regional Social Work Services if outside normal working hours (02895049999)

This policy was revised and updated on 06/2015, 01/2016, 12/2016 and 02/2017 and accepted by Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee.

Links

This policy links to the following;

- Absence of the Leader Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Child Arrival and Collection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- E-safety and Social Networking Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Security Policy
- Unwanted Adult Visitor Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy