

Bizzie Lizzies Nursery and Pre School.

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Peer on peer abuse Policy

Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Harmful Behaviour Policy

Commitment to Safeguarding

At Bizzie Lizzie's, we are committed to ensuring that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is addressed **immediately, consistently, and appropriately**. Our priority is always to reduce harm and to consider the impact of incidents on each child's **emotional, mental, and physical well-being**.

Framework and Legislation

This policy is underpinned by:

- **Children Act 1989** – the child's welfare is paramount.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)** – all assessments must consider the child's views and resilience.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019)** – schools and settings must ensure procedures are in place to hear the voice of the child.

Introduction to Abuse and Harmful Behaviour

Abusive behaviour can occur in early years settings. It is vital that staff understand:

- **What abuse looks like.**
- **How to manage incidents.**
- **What support and intervention may be required.**
- **What preventative strategies can reduce future risks.**

Abuse is abuse. It must never be tolerated or dismissed as “banter” or “part of growing up.”

Types of Abuse

This list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse requires careful consideration, support, and action.

1. Physical abuse – e.g. hitting, kicking, biting, nipping, shaking, hair pulling.

- Important to consider intent (deliberate or accidental).
- Understand the reasons behind the behaviour before deciding on consequences.

2. Sexually harmful behaviour / sexual abuse – e.g. inappropriate language, role play, touching, assault.

- Not always premeditated or intended to harm.
- May cause distress to both the child displaying the behaviour and the child experiencing it.
- Needs sensitive handling, clear boundaries, and specialist support where necessary.

3. Prejudiced behaviour – linked to bullying or discrimination based on:

- Disability or SEN
- Ethnic, cultural, or religious background
- Gender
- Family circumstances (care, occupation, poverty, social class)
- Sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transgender)

Such behaviour can leave children feeling excluded, powerless, or marginalised.

Expected Action from All Staff

Staff must:

- Respond to incidents **immediately and sensitively**.
- Gather accurate facts as soon as possible.
- Use calm, consistent language and avoid being prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive, or irresponsible.
- Provide immediate support for those affected.

Gathering the Facts

When investigating an incident, staff should:

- Speak to all staff and children involved (age-appropriately).
- Use **open questions**: *What happened? Where? When? Who was involved? Who witnessed it?*

- Ensure behaviour management strategies are consistent across staff and parents.
- Share relevant information with new staff and maintain appropriate levels of supervision.
- Escalate to the **safeguarding procedure** immediately if there is risk of significant harm or if a crime may have been committed.

Informing Parents

- Parents should be informed **as soon as possible**, ideally face-to-face.
- In some cases, advice must first be sought from police or safeguarding services before informing parents.
- Staff must use sensitive, non-judgmental language to avoid increasing fear or anxiety.

Points to Consider

- **Age differences** – especially in relation to sexual exploration in very young children (1–4 years).
- **Location** – was the incident in a visible, supervised area?
- **Consistency of accounts** – do all children describe the incident similarly?
- **Understanding** – do children grasp privacy, body awareness, and the impact of their behaviour?
- **Repetition** – has the behaviour occurred more than once or persisted after intervention?

If unsure about risk, staff should **seek advice from MASH**.

Next Steps

For the child displaying harmful behaviour:

- Explore reasons for the behaviour.
- Consider referrals for early help or specialist services.
- Provide additional family support if required.
- Apply proportionate consequences (e.g. restorative approaches).
- If risk persists, complete an **individual risk assessment** in partnership with parents and external agencies.

For the child who has experienced harm:

- Provide ongoing emotional support, even if they initially appear to be coping.
- Monitor for delayed responses (e.g. anxiety, fear, or withdrawal).

Preventative Strategies for Settings

- Promote respectful behaviour through daily practice, routines, and modelling.
- Use the curriculum and play opportunities to reinforce empathy, tolerance, and kindness.
- Regularly review supervision levels and staff deployment.
- Maintain open communication with parents about behaviour management strategies.