**Safeguarding Children**

It is everybody’s responsibility to ensure children are safe and live in an environment where they can thrive, be happy and develop their full potential.

Child protection:

Being Free Being Me acknowledges that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse, dealing with these and reporting concerns of the children that are in our care or other members of our community.

Staff in childcare settings may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child’s behaviour which may indicate abuse

It is our job to:

* Identify and protect children from maltreatment and abuse
* Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
* Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand child protection procedures
* Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with SEN and Disabilities and other vulnerable or isolated families and children
* Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information to other parties as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Croydon ​Safeguarding Children Board
* Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
* Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of our staff
* Ensure children are heard and that their feelings and opinions are considered
* Ensure that we keep good accurate records of all events related to safeguarding to protect children in our care and in the community.

**Abuse might come from:**

Abuse or harm to children can come from home, relatives and the community (including staff from educational settings and even in the form of peer to peer abuse).

Abuse can happen due to cultural and religious practices (FGM, radicalisation, force marriage, etc).

There are a number of reasons identified that will contribute to the child not being able to speak about the abuse:

* Fear of what is happening next
* Fear of not being believed
* Not being listened to
* Being embarrassed
* Adults not being empathetic

This is why it is so important to always observe the child, get to know them well and acknowledge them, listen to them.

Disclosures can also come from family and other members of the community.

Disclosures can be direct or indirect.

When a child makes a disclosure of abuse, the member of staff must remain calm and not show personal feelings otherwise this might lead to the child to shut down.

**Definitions of abuse**:

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

* **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
* **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child.
* **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
* **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

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Also: **bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, peer on peer abuse and self harm**

**‘Significant harm’ :** is the threshold that justifies intervention (impeding the child's learning, stopping a child from developing into a happy and confident person.

***Signs of child abuse and neglect***

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

* significant changes in a child's behaviour
* deterioration in a child’s general well-being
* unexplained bruising or marks
* comments made by a child which give cause for concern
* inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.
* Unexplained absences

**When you notice signs of neglect, distress or evidence of injury**

If staff notices signs of distress, neglect or evidence of unexplained or undisclosed injury ask the child what happened.

Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Maria Souto). Records of this must be completed and kept confidentially.

Designated Safeguarding Lead to refer the case to the LA children's social services.

DSL to follow up with report in writing within 48 hours. Social Care to notify decision to provider within 24 hours.

Sometimes a child can come to a provision with a bruise or small injuries. Written registration of these small events must also be kept up to date and sign by both parties. (if the injury comes from home or if the injury occurred at the setting, i.e: if a child has fallen in the playground: bruising, etc). This will help professionals to identify any patterns.

***When abuse is disclosed by the child***

* + reassure the child that they were not to blame for the abuse and were right to speak out.
  + listen to the child, do not ask leading questions, or many questions. (reflective listening)
  + Ask for their account of the story and if they have told anybody else. Be aware of the differences between fact, opinion and rumours.
  + Use TED formula for questions: tell me, explain and or describe (why? can confuse child)
  + Staff is not to promise the child that the information will not be passed on.
  + Staff to notify these events immediately to the designated Safeguarding Lead (Maria Souto Varela). DSL to record the event on a ‘cause for concern form’ accurately with date, time and events. DSL to contact social services in Croydon with the relevant information to discuss the matter. This also applies when disclosures come from other members of the public to our members of staff.

**Referrals**

See contact details below at the end of the document.

See referral form attached for referrals regarding safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding referrals fall under 3 categories:

* **Early intervention:** The child's needs are broader than one service can address or there are concerns about the child’s welfare, wellbeing, behaviour, learning)

Early Intervention and prevention services are often made to ‘services’ other than Children Social Care. (Local referral procedures) We will liaise with other agencies and carry an assessment to move forward with an early intervention when needed.

* **Child in need:** a child is unlikely to be able to maintain or achieve welfare and development without the help of services from the LA or child is disabled. the referrals are made to Children's Social Services.
* **Child protection (at risk of significant harm)**: LA makes enquiries enabling to decide if child requires a child protection plan. Referrals are made to Children's Social Services and police when necessary.

**Suspicion of disclosure of abuse towards a member of staff**

For concerns of abuse regarding any adult (volunteer, freelancer or employee) that works with the children at Being Free Being Me, the designated safeguarding lead will contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) to discuss the best course of action.

All members of staff, volunteers, freelancers and all services users to be made aware of the LADO contact number for Croydon Council. This is in the case that the suspected person of committing abuse or harm was a manager or a designated safeguarding officer. In that case the person will go directly to the LADO contact with his/her concerns (see Whistleblowing policy).

See contact details for the LADO below at the end of this document.

**Other considerations**

* Do not approach the abuser about the abuse
* As a member of staff it is not your job to decide if abuse has happened or not, investigate, examine the child or attempt to resolve the issue.
* Refer to medical support if needed or contact the police if the child is in danger
* If the abuser is close, take the child to aside to be able to think of what is the best course of action and assert the child’s needs
* Staff should remain from sharing their concerns about a child to other colleagues or family.
* Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child. Parents can access confidential records if appropriate in line with guidance from the CSCB.
* We are required to monitor children’s attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and there isn’t a cause for concern. Parents needs to inform us prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the nursery on the day so the nursery management are able to account for a child’s absence.
* Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral, any absences will immediately be reported to the Local Authority Children's social care team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

**Chronology:**

Being Free Being Me keeps an up to date ‘chronology’ document recording significant events in a child’s life from the moment there is a concern.

It has been demonstrated that cases of child deaths, abuse and neglect can be avoided if there is a robust chronology of events logged and all professionals involved communicate effectively.

These need to be reviewed and analysed. The chronology is kept for as long as there is a concern.

A Chronology starts once Children’s Social Care accepts a referral.

Chronology does not include sensitive information, assessments or opinions. Families need to be involved in the development of this document unless there are legal reasons to not share it with families for child’s safety.

**More vulnerable groups:**

Looked after children are especially vulnerable.

They have become or they were looked after in the past as a result of abuse and or neglect.

Strong partnership between us and other parties is needed, for example, we will have details of the child’s social worker, we will have care arrangements clarified (rights of birth parents, the rights of those with parental responsibilities, etc).

Management will explore ways of increasing staff’s understanding and knowledge of how to deal with looked after children, children with SEN or any other more vulnerable groups (i.e: training, getting extra external pastoral support, etc).

Children with special educational needs

Having a specific learning or physical disability can make children more prone to being bullied. Because of the nature of some of these conditions (autism, communicational issues), a child will be unable to disclose the abuse or it can be seen as normal if the child is isolated.

We will make sure staff is vigilant and ensure all learners are offered opportunities to achieve, to thrive, to develop into confident and happy citizens.

**Also read:**

Anti bullying

Behaviour

British values and prevent duty

Looked after children

Physical intervention

Safe staff recruitment (also volunteers, visitors)

Whistleblowing

Usage of phones, cameras and recording devices and E safety

Keeping children safe in education part 1, 2018 // all staff to read

**Our forms:**

Cause for concern form

Chronology

**Safeguarding contacts**

-If the child is in immediate danger, call 999.

**-SPOC** (single point of contact) **for members of the public/ family members**

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/childproctsafe/childprotect>

Phone: 020 8255 2888   
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

**Out of hours**

If you have any urgent concerns which need an immediate response at night or on the weekend, please contact the Emergency Duty Team.

Phone: 0208 726 6400  
Monday to Friday, 5pm to 9am  
Weekends and bank holidays, 24 hours

**Safeguarding concerns for professionals**

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/childproctsafe/professionals-with-child-safeguarding-concerns>

**Urgent referrals**

If you have concerns about a child and think the matter needs same-day intervention from a social worker, you must call the SPOC team immediately.

Phone: 0202 8726 6400  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Within 3 hours of the call, you must complete the [multi-agency referral form](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Multi%20Agency%20Referral%20form%20for%20Intensive%20Early%20Help%20%28BSFS%29%20or%20CSC%20finaldraft%204%20Dec%202019.docx) and email it to [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk)  
  
We will notify you in writing about the outcome of your referral.

**Out of hours contact for urgent concerns**

If you need a immediate response at night or on a weekend, please contact the Emergency Duty Team. You'll be put through to an operator who will take basic information and then pass this on to a social worker to contact you.

Phone: 0208 726 640  
Monday to Friday, 5pm to 9am  
Weekends and bank holidays, 24 hours

**Non-urgent referrals**

For all other referrals, please complete the [online referral form](https://my.croydon.gov.uk/MashReferrals?qWname=New&qServiceRef=ChildReferral) or download the referral form and send it to [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk)

Unless the child is at immediate risk, you must get consent from the parent or family member before you make the referral. If you don't, we won't be able to accept the referral.

**If your referral is submitted out of office hours**

Your referral will be picked up the next working day. Out of hours includes: 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, but doesn't include public holidays.

For children outside of the Croydon area

All notifications of looked after children placed in Croydon should be sent to: [OLANotifications@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:OLANotifications@croydon.gov.uk)

**Early help best start family solutions service**

Early help services have been realigned under a new family solutions service which aims to provide locality based early help to families to prevent difficulties becoming worse. The family solutions service provides an intensive/targeted service and will work with children and families from 0 to 18 years old, where there is one or more of the following:

* families affected by domestic violence
* families living with drug and alcohol misuse
* families affected by parental mental ill health
* families where children have previously been in need and in receipt of a more specialist service but continue to require further support at an intensive level of need
* families living with a low level of neglect
* families where a child or children are at risk of or have already been excluded from school

This list is not exhaustive

The family solutions service will work closely with internal and external services and agencies to provide the most appropriate response to children and families co-ordinated through a lead professional (family key worker) in the family solutions service.

If you would like to seek advice before making a referral you can speak to an early help consultant in the single point of contact by contacting the professionals’ consultation line on 020 8726 6464. The consultation line should only be used in cases where there is no allocated early help family solutions service lead professional or social worker.

**Advice and support on making a referral update:**

**SPOC consultation line**  
Phone: 020 876 6464  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Due to the current situation with COVID 19, the consultation line number is unavailable until further notice. If you would like advice or support on making a referral, please contact us via [childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:childreferrals@croydon.gov.uk), providing your contact details and a brief summary of your query and a social worker will contact you.

If you experience any difficulties with this new service provision, please contact **Jonathan Lung (Service Manager: Single Point of Contact  - SPOC)**  ([Jonathan.Lung@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Lung@croydon.gov.uk))

**Local Authority Designated Officer**

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/childproctsafe/lado>

020 8255 2889 / LADO@croydon.gov.uk

Ema[LADO@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@croydon.gov.uk)

**Address Line:**

**Others**

* Croydon partnership early help: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/ccfpartnership/early-help>
* Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Threshold Guidance: <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon%20Safeguarding%20Children%20Board%20Threshold%20Guidance.pdf>
* Emotional wellbeing and mental health referral, children social care and early help:

<https://ehmportal.croydon.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/help/apply/cpassess#h1>

Annexe COVID Safeguarding considerations (Documentation dated from the 27 April. Applicable during the shutdown phase).

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uCjGuLTr2aJZA10F8yD_7aiI9jJqJufEnwOcGp_8k_o/edit#heading=h.gjdgxs>

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| This policy was adopted by: Being free being me | Date: May 16th 2020 |
| To be reviewed: May 2021 | Signed: Maria Souto Varela and Catia Lopes |