

## Child Protection Policy

### Rationale:

Small World is committed to the prevention of child abuse and to the protection of children. This commitment means that the interests and welfare of the child are the prime considerations when any decision is made about suspected abuse.

### Objectives:

- To maximise child safety at the centre.
- To minimise the risk of false accusation for personnel at the centre.
- To ensure that there are clear guidelines for personnel to follow in the event of actual or suspected abuse that keep children safe.
- To support children, parents and caregivers to develop strategies for keeping children safe.

### Procedures:

- All personnel employed at the centre are formally vetted as part of their employment process.
- All visitors to the centre are required to sign the visitors' book (detailing their name, the date, times and purpose of the visit, and a contact phone number) and are closely monitored by Small World personnel.
- Staff will endeavour to be visible at all times when working with children.
- Small World maintains an 'open door' policy at all times.
- Only permanent staff or regular relievers are involved in nappy changing routines.
- The children's toilet area is off limits to all adults unless accompanied by, or visible to, a Small World staff member.
- Staff will be supported to access ongoing professional development in relation to child protection.
- The centre will maintain resources about child protection at the centre for staff and parents to access.
- Small World will develop relationships with individuals, agencies and organisations in the community who can offer support to children, families and staff in the event of suspected or actual abuse

In responding to suspected or actual abuse staff at Small World will immediately advise a member of the management team about their concerns. Other responses may include –

- Documenting observations, impressions, and communications which cause concern.
- Consulting with, or reporting to, appropriate agencies (e.g. Child, Youth and Family, the District Health service etc.).
- When it is suspected that abuse has occurred outside the family or by a person not closely known to the family, the family will be informed before referral to Child, Youth and Family or the Police.

- When it is suspected that abuse has occurred within the family or by someone closely known to the family, the family will not initially be informed of the decision to report or consult.
- When an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member the matter will be reported immediately to management and the staff member concerned will be suspended (on pay) while the matter is investigated.
- Suspended staff will be encouraged and supported to seek personal and/or legal advice.

In responding to suspected child abuse Small World staff will adhere to the following principles at all times (as advocated by the *Ministry of Education in Prevent Child Abuse – Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services, 1993*)

- Believe what children say and what you see.
- Always take action in the short term to ensure the immediate safety of the child.
- Record concerns and observations.
- Do not make decisions alone.
- Act on concerns.
- Seek support.
- Never attempt to interview children.