



# Policies and Procedures

**Revised:- 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021**

## Administering medication policy

If a child attending Astbury Merecats requires prescription medication of any kind, their parent or carer must complete a permission to administer medicine form in advance. Staff at the club will not administer any medication without such prior written consent.

Ideally children should take their medication before arriving at the club. Astbury Merecats can only administer medication that has been prescribed by a medical doctor. To ensure that this is the case all medication provided must have the prescription sticker attached which includes the child's name, the date, drug name and the dosage.

A designated staff member will be responsible for administering medication or for witnessing self-administration by the child. The designated person will record receipt of the medication on a Medication Log, will check that the medication is properly labelled, and will ensure that it is stored securely during the session. Before any medication is given, the designated person will:

- Check that the Club has received written consent
- Ask another member of staff to witness that the correct dosage is given.

When the medication has been administered, the designated person must:

- Record all relevant details on the Record of Medication given form
- Ask the child's parent or carer to sign the form to acknowledge that the medication has been given.

When the medication is returned to the child's parent or carer, the designated person will record this on the Medication Log.

Staff will keep a child's medication safe until it is required. Inhalers must be labelled with the child's name.

If a child refuses to take their medication, staff will not force them to do so. The manager and the child's parent or carer will be notified, and the incident recorded on the Record of Medication Given.

Certain medications require specialist training before use, e.g. Epi Pens. If a child requires such medication the manager will arrange appropriate training as soon as possible. It may be necessary to absent the child until such training has been undertaken. Where specialist training is required, only appropriately trained staff may administer the medication.

A child's parent or carer must complete a new Permission to Administer Medication form if there are any changes to a child's medication (including dosage or frequency). If a child suffers from a long-term medical condition the Club will ask the child's parents to provide a medical care plan from their doctor, to clarify exactly what the symptoms and treatment are so that the Club has a clear statement of the child's medical requirements.

## **Emergency evacuation / closure procedure**

Astbury Merecats will make every effort to keep the Club open, but in exceptional circumstances, we may need to close at short notice.

The following are possible reasons for emergency closure:

- Serious weather conditions
- Heating system failure
- Burst water pipes
- No water
- Serious accident or illness
- Fire

In the event of Astbury Merecats being unable to open due to severe weather conditions or any other unforeseen circumstances, all parents of children attending that day will be contacted as soon as possible. In these circumstances the cost of childcare for that day will be discounted from the following months invoice. Should closure need to take place part way through a session, a refund will not be given in this instance as resources and staffing would already have been accounted for on this day. In an emergency our primary concern will be to ensure that both children and staff are kept safe. If it is necessary to evacuate the Club, the following steps will be taken:

- If appropriate the manager or session supervisor will contact the emergency services
- All children will be escorted from the building to the assembly point, using the nearest safe exit
- No attempt will be made to collect personal belongings, or to re-enter the building after evacuation
- A nominated member of staff will check the premises and will collect the register (including emergency contact details) providing that this does not put anyone at risk
- Before leaving the building, the designated person will close all accessible doors and windows
- The register will be taken and all children and staff accounted for
- If any person is missing from the register, the emergency services will be informed immediately
- The manager will contact parents to collect their children. If the register is not available, the manager will use the emergency contacts list (which is kept off site)
- All children will be supervised until they are safely collected
- If after every attempt, a child's parent or carers cannot be contacted, the Club will follow the Uncollected Child procedure
- If the Club has to close, even temporarily, or operate from alternative premises, as a result of the emergency, we will notify Ofsted

## **Equalities policy**

At Astbury Merekids we will ensure that we provide a safe and caring environment, free from discrimination, for everyone in our community, including children with additional needs. To achieve the club's objective of creating an environment free from discrimination and welcoming to all, the Club will:

- Respect the different racial origins, religions, cultures and languages in a multi-ethnic society so that each child is valued as an individual without racial or gender stereotyping
- Not discriminate against children on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, class or family status
- Help all children to celebrate and express their cultural and religious identity by providing a wide range of appropriate resources and activities
- Strive to ensure that children feel good about themselves and others, by celebrating the differences which make us all unique individuals
- Ensure that its services are available to all parents/carers and children in the local community
- Ensure that the club's recruitment policies and procedures are open fair and non-discriminatory
- Work to fulfil all the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010

## **Racial Harassment**

The Club will not tolerate any form of racial harassment. The Club will challenge racist and discriminatory remarks, attitudes and behaviour from the children at the Club, from staff and from any other adults on Club premises (e.g parents/carers collecting children).

## **Equal Opportunities Named Co-ordinator**

The Club's Equal Opportunities Named Coordinator (ENCO) is responsible for ensuring that:

- Staff receive relevant and appropriate training
- The Equal Opportunities policy is consistent with current legislation and guidance
- Appropriate action is taken wherever discriminatory behaviour, language or attitudes occur

## **Early Years Foundation Stage policy**

Astbury Merecats is committed to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS covers children from birth to the end of their reception year.

The EYFS is based on four themes,

### **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to motivate children.

### **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We observe the children and assess their interests and development, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

### **Teaching and Learning styles**

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We develop their learning through, The Development Matters "Characteristics of Effective learning" by,

- Playing and exploring - Children play and explore and communicate with other children as they begin to investigate and solve problems
- Active learning – Children are interested and engaged and take ownership of their learning
- Creating and thinking critically- children are creative in all areas and adults support their learning and understanding by clarifying ideas, encouraging children to explore and asking open ended questions
- Children are able to freely access resources and use them in a variety of ways to further their learning.

### **Areas Of Learning**

We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected. The EYFS areas of learning and development now consist of:

#### **3 Prime areas**

1. Physical development,
2. Personal and social development
3. Communication and language

#### **4 Specific areas**

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Expressive art and design
4. Understanding the world

As a club we aim to meet the needs of all children through

- Identifying EYFS children upon joining the club and informing the other staff
- Determining the principal EYFS provider for each child
- Assign a key worker for each EYFS child
- Ensuring that staff receive relevant EYFS training
- Gaining parental consent for information sharing, where necessary
- Agreeing information sharing policies with the principal EYFS provider
- Meeting regularly with the principal EYFS provider to agree next steps for development

### **Observation and planning**

At Astbury Merecats we provide opportunities and an environment that stimulate curiosity. When the children arrive at the club, everything is available and accessible for the children, including the outdoors. We believe that an enabling environment is where children can play and select what they want to do themselves, this way they become deeply engaged in what they are doing.

While this is happening, the adults will be observing and **waiting** for a moment in which they feel they can make a difference. They will then interact to **'teach'** the 'next step' as appropriate for that unique child at that moment. We plan by capturing the interest of the child or children in the present moment, as children have a natural desire to learn, explore and question.

We have a weekly discussion with children, giving them the opportunity to plan for activities where additional resources may need to be purchased for the following week, e.g. for baking /craft activities of their choice. We believe that using children's interests to direct planning, develops a high level of motivation for their learning.

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. Our indoor and outdoor area is organised to allow children to explore in a safe, secure environment. We provide activities both indoors and outdoors and provide open ended resources, which support children's learning and development in all areas of learning.

We believe the features of effective teaching and learning are: -

- The partnership between play workers and parents, so that children feel secure at the club and develop a sense of belonging and well-being.
- An enabling environment is where children can play and select what they want to do themselves
- To provide activities for children to take part in that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical and social emotional abilities.
- To support learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning of children through observations.

## **Health and safety policy**

Astbury Merecats considers health and safety to be of upmost importance. We comply with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 always.

The Club has appropriate insurance cover, including public liability insurance. Each member of staff follows the Club's Health and Safety policy and is responsible for:

- Maintaining a safe environment
- Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others attending the club
- Reporting all accidents and incidents which have caused injury or damage or may do so in the future
- Undertaking relevant health and safety training when required to do so by the manager
- Any member of staff who disregards safety instructions or recognised safe practices, will be subject to disciplinary procedures

### **Responsibilities of the registered person**

The registered person for the setting holds ultimate responsibility and liability for the safe operation of the Club

- All staff receive information on health and safety matters, and receive training where necessary
- The Health and Safety policy and procedures are reviewed regularly
- Staff understand and follow health and safety procedures
- Resources are provided to meet the Club's health and safety responsibilities
- All accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences are properly reported and recorded. This includes informing Ofsted, child protection agencies and the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) where appropriate.
- All reported accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences are reviewed, so that preventative measures can be taken

### **Responsibilities of the manager**

The club's manager is responsible for ensuring that children are as safe outside as they are inside, during each session by ensuring

- Premises are clean, well lit, adequately ventilated and maintained at an appropriate temperature and toilet and washing and rest facilities all meet health, safety and welfare requirements
- A staff member checks the outdoor area for any object that may danger the children and remove as appropriate before children are allowed outside
- All the club's equipment is safe to use and securely stored
- The fencing is safe and intact
- All gates are locked when children are outside

- A working telephone is available on the premises at all times
- Chemicals and cleaning materials are stored appropriately, and in accordance with CoSSH data sheets.
- External pathways are cleared in severe weather
- Daily environment checks are carried out in accordance with our Risk Assessment policy.

### **Food Hygiene**

Staff must ensure that children wash their hands before handling food or drink and after using the toilet

- Cuts and abrasions (whether on children or staff) are kept covered.

### **Dealing with body fluids**

Spillages of blood, vomit, urine and faeces will be cleaned up immediately in accordance with our Intimate Care policy.

### **Staffing levels**

Staff ratios and levels of supervision are always appropriate to the number, ages and abilities of the children present, and to the risks associated with the activities being undertaken.

### **Staff training**

All new staff should have the club's health and safety procedure clearly explained to them as part of their induction process

- All new staff should be trained in the evacuation process in the event of a fire or other emergency
- At least one member of staff must hold a paediatric first aid certificate at every session
- All staff to be kept aware of signs of illness

### **Outings**

- All vehicles used to transport the children must be properly licensed, insured, inspected and maintained. The appropriate restraints will be used for all children
- No children should be left alone in a vehicle
- A risk assessment will be completed prior to the outing
- Adult to child ratios must take into account the age and ability of the children and type of activity / outing involved
- If using a minibus, the driver must be trained and experienced in driving this size of vehicle
- A travelling first aid kit must be taken on all outings
- All parents must sign an outing consent form to allow their child to be taken off the premises
- The manager will be familiar with the venue / area to be visited and will ensure that children's emergency details are taken on outings and kept secure
- A paediatric first aider will attend all outings
- The club phone will be taken to enable continuity of safety
- All children's medication will be taken on the trip and a member of staff will be designated to be in charge of this



### **Missing child policy**

At Astbury Merecats our staff are always alert to the possibility that children can go missing during sessions. To minimise the risk of this happening staff will carry out periodic head counts.

If a child cannot be located, the following steps will be taken;

- All staff will be informed that the child is missing.
- Staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and surrounding area.
- After 10 minutes the police will be informed. The manager will then contact the child's parents or carers.
- Staff will continue to search for the child whilst waiting for the police and parents to arrive.
- Staff will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children at the club.
- The manager will liaise with the police and the child's parent or carer.

The incident will be recorded in the Incident Log. A review will be conducted regarding this and any other related incidents along with relevant policies and procedures. Staff will identify and implement any changes as necessary.

If the police or Social Care were involved in the incident, Ofsted will be informed.

Useful numbers

Children's Assessment Team: 0300 123 5012

Out of Hours: 0300 123 5022

Police: 999 or 101

Ofsted: 0300 123 4666

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. Introduction:**

This policy demonstrates Astbury Merekat's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Early years and childcare providers have a duty under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (April 2017).

Early years and childcare providers must ensure that:

- staff complete safeguarding training that enables them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and in a timely and appropriate way; and
- they have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and the CESCOP as appropriate. This lead must complete child protection training. (Childminders must take the lead responsibility themselves.)

This policy demonstrates the setting's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation; it should be read in conjunction with:

- [Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership \(CESCOP\) procedures](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015](#)
- [Keeping children Safe In Education 2020](#)
- [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" \(April 2017\)](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019](#)
- Setting online safety policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff use of mobile phones and Social Media Policy
- ["Preventing and Tackling Bullying" DfE July 2017](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance](#)
- [Mandatory reporting of FGM – procedural information](#)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners in this setting make sure their approach is child centred. This means that we consider, always, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Through our day-to-day contact with children and direct work with families, staff take notice of indicators of possible abuse or neglect and consult with Children's Services in Cheshire East (or in neighbouring authorities dependent upon the child's area of residence). We recognise that we form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This responsibility also means that we are aware of the behaviour of staff in the setting; we maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned.

In our setting we ensure that:

- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, are treated equally and have equal rights to protection
- All staff act on concerns or disclosures that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Children and staff involved in Safeguarding issues receive appropriate support
- Staff adhere to a Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) and Staff Handbook and understand what to do in the event of any allegations against any adult working in the setting
- All staff are aware of Early Help and ensure that relevant assessments and referrals take place
- All staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label; they recognise that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another

Adults understand that where children display behaviour which worried adults, this might be a sign of possible abuse or trauma.

This policy is available on our setting website and printed copies of this document are available to parents upon request. We inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our setting and through our setting newsletter.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction; alongside our Staff Code of Conduct. All staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures and we ensure that their knowledge on safeguarding issues are kept up to date.

In addition, whilst it is not statutory for early years settings it is considered good practice that all staff are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*', DfE (2020) and are required to sign to indicate that they have read and understood it. The Designated Lead is able to support all staff in understanding their responsibilities and implementing it in their practice.

## **2.0 Aims of this document:**

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in doing so ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice across the setting
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children

- To raise awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard all children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To emphasise the need for good communication between all members of staff in matters relating to child protection
- To promote safe practice and encourage challenge for poor and unsafe practice
- To promote effective working relationships with other agencies involved with Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, especially with Children's Social Care and the Police
- To ensure that all members of the setting community are aware of our procedures for ensuring staff suitability to work with children
- To ensure that staff understand their responsibility to support children who have suffered abuse in accordance with their agreed plan e.g. Child in Need/ Child Protection Plan

### **3.0 Scope of this Policy**

This policy applies to all members of the setting community (including staff, children, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors, agency staff and students, or anyone working on behalf of Astbury Merecats.

This policy is consistent with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) child protection procedures.

### **4.0 Definitions of terms used in this document:**

**Child Protection:** refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:** refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

**Early Help:** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

**Staff:** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the setting in either a paid or voluntary capacity, full time or part time. This includes parents, Owners, Committee members and Trustees. It also includes child-minding assistants or co-childminders working together in a child-minding setting.

**Child:** refers to all children who have not yet reached the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to children from our own setting; however the policy will extend to visiting children from other establishments, teenage parents and children on work experience placements.

**Parent:** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role e.g. carers, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents and adoptive parents.

### **5.0 Prevention:**

Children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe is promoted. Staff support children in an age appropriate way to recognise and manage risks in different situations, including when using the internet and social media, being able to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable, recognising when pressure from others, including people they know, threatens their personal safety and well-being and supporting them in developing effective ways of resisting pressure.

The setting has established an ethos where:

- Children feel secure in a safe environment in which they can learn and develop.
- Children are encouraged to talk and are actively listened to. Staff consult, listen and respond appropriately to all children.
- Clear risk assessments are in place and staff respond consistently to protect young babies and children whilst enabling them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development.
- Children know that there are adults in the setting whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty.
- Consistent approaches are in place to promote positive behaviour that is appropriate for individual children's stages of development.
- All adults recognise that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and are aware of the signs that children may be at risk of harm either within the setting or in the family or wider community outside the setting.
- Parents are partners in the setting and are encouraged to have an understanding of their obligations regarding Child Protection by intervention as and when appropriate
- Adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice is in place for staff, parents and children, these can be found on the parent/staff notice board or can be given verbally to parents.
- There is always a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL in the setting who has the seniority and skills, undertakes appropriate Safeguarding training, and is given the time to carry out this important role.

- All adults feel comfortable and supported to draw safeguarding issues to the attention of the manager and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and are able to pose safeguarding questions with “respectful uncertainty” as part of their shared responsibility to safeguard children.
- Staff are aware of the DfE guidance contained in ‘[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused](#)’ – guidance for practitioners March 2015.
- We comply with ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2018 and support the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CESCP) Timely Support for Children and Families in Cheshire East. This document supports professionals to access the right help and support for children and their families at the right time.
- We systematically monitor children’s welfare, keeping accurate records, speaking to parents and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary
- There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regard to safeguarding training.
- The setting has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site, including an allegation of abuse against the DSL/Manager
- The setting carries out an annual review of the Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- All staff are aware of setting guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.
- We ensure that appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place for devices with internet access.

### **6.0 Early Help:**

All staff understand the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CESCP) ‘Continuum of Need’ and Child Protection procedures; to ensure that the needs of our children are effectively assessed; decisions are based on a child’s development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors. We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made. We actively support multi agency planning for these children and, in doing so, provide information from the child’s point of view; bringing their lived experience to life as evidenced by observations or information provided. Staff know how to pass on any concerns no matter how trivial they seem.

Staff members always act in the interests of the child and are aware of their responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. In our setting staff are aware that they must be prepared to identify those children who may benefit from early help. The staff are alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Has a disability and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)

- is a young carer
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a 'privately fostered child'
- is a refugee
- are unaccompanied asylum seeking children

If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the setting will consider whether the Early Help approach should be considered. Staff are aware that early identification of concerns and the use of Early Help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

If a member of staff has concerns about a child, they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children's social care/consult with ChECS/contact the police. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP). In the first instance staff should discuss 'Early Help' requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If early help is appropriate the Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

As staff may be required to support other agencies and practitioners and parents/carers and children in an early help assessment; all staff are aware of the relevant assessments and appropriate support is given to them when they undertake an early help assessment.

Where early help and or other support is appropriate we ensure that the case is kept under constant review. If the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving, we take appropriate action.

The children in our setting know that there are adults whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty.

There is adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice for staff, parents and children that can be found on the parent / staff notice board.

## **7.0 Early Help, Child in Need and Child Protection**

In our setting we ensure that we follow Cheshire East's Multi-agency Practice Standards [CE multi-agency practice standards 2016](#) to ensure that our work, on behalf of our children, is of a consistently good standard. We use these standards to challenge other workers on behalf of children where the standards are not being met.

## **8.0 Concerns about a child- recording and reporting:**

Our recording procedures are in line with those outlined in Cheshire East's "Recording and Reporting Guidance." 2019; the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Lead are aware of this document.

Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or their Deputy, without delay. A written record should be made of these concerns as soon as possible following the disclosure/concern being raised; this must be on the same working day.

Where staff have conversations with a child who discloses abuse they follow the basic principles:

- listen rather than directly question, remain calm
- never stop a child who is recalling significant events
- never ask a child if they are being abused
- make a record of discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language – do not substitute words)
- advise you will have to pass the information on
- avoid coaching/prompting
- never take photographs of any injury
- never undress a child to physically examine them
- allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support meetings
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult

Staff are aware that they should not question the child; other than to respond with TED - **Tell me what you mean by that, Explain what you mean by that, Describe that.** Staff will observe and listen, but do not probe/ask any leading questions.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will obtain key information and agree relevant actions after making a timely assessment of the information.

We recognise that parents may hold key information about incidents/allegations therefore, **in the majority of situations; the Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the parents and gain their consent** to discussing the situation with others. Staff are aware that there will be very few instances where, to speak to the parents, could further endanger the child. In those situations they would still consult/refer, but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

The following situations are the instances in which parental consent would not be gained prior to a referral:

- Discussion would impede a police investigation or social work enquiry
- Sexual abuse is suspected
- Organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- Fabrication of an illness is suspected
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is suspected



- Forced marriage is suspected
- Honour Based Abuse
- Extremism or radicalisation is suspected
- County Lines activities are suspected

Staff are also aware that, even in situations where the parent does not give consent, the best interests of the child are paramount and therefore, they would share their concerns. In addition, the referral will not be delayed if it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers.

A consultation will take place with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) and/or the police immediately. Where a child lives in a different authority the Designated Safeguarding Lead follows the procedures for that authority.

Where possible we ensure that contacts with outside agencies are through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy; however staff are aware that anyone can make this contact. Where a member of staff makes contact they ensure that they make the Designated Safeguarding Lead aware as soon as possible.

Safeguarding Records relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns are kept in a separate, confidential file, securely locked and stored away from the child's main file. Authorisation to access these records is controlled by the Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All records provide a factual, accurate, evidence-based account. Records are signed, dated and where appropriate, witnessed.

The setting ensures that safeguarding information, including Child Protection information, is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ensuring that information is:

- used fairly and lawfully
- for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept for no longer than necessary
- handled according to people's data protection rights
- kept safe and secure.

We ensure that information is transferred safely and securely when a child with a Safeguarding Record transfers to another setting. We also ensure that Key workers or social workers are notified where a child leaves the setting (as appropriate).

## **9.0 Safe Working Practices**

### **Use of mobile phones, cameras and internet:**

The setting and staff take safeguarding seriously and understand this policy is over- arching. We refer staff to the '*Mobile Phone and Camera Policy*', '*Staff Code of conduct*' and

*‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in Education Settings May 2019’.*

**Personal mobiles and electronic devices:**

Personal mobile phones and recording devices (tablets, cameras, laptops etc) are never used by staff at the setting.

If staff have personal phones or devices they are kept in the staff members car or handed in to management to be locked away and will be switched off or on silent whilst during the teaching day.

Electronic devices should be password protected so that content cannot be accessed by unauthorised users.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that there is no illegal or inappropriate content stored or used on their device when brought on to setting premises.

**Mobiles belonging to visitors:**

We request that mobiles belonging to visitors are either switched off and stored securely in a locked cabinet on entering the setting.

**Mobiles belonging to older children:**

Have signed consent from their parents giving permission for the child to have a mobile and agreeing that they will be stored securely and be switched off or on silent whilst in the setting.

(Please insert setting’s procedure for all mobile phones)

**Dedicated setting devices:**

To protect children we will ensure that the dedicated setting mobile phone:

- remains the property of Astbury Merecats and in using them staff will follow the *‘Mobile phone policy*
- is stored securely when not in use.
- is protected with a password, is clearly labelled and its use is open to scrutiny. All staff are vigilant and alert to any potential misuse.
- is only used by allocated people who have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse and know how to minimise the risk. These staff are responsible for their own behaviour regarding the use of the phone and avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.
- is not used in areas such as toilets, changing rooms, nappy changing areas and sleep areas.
- does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children.

### **Cameras photography and images:**

Astbury Merecats will obtain parents' and carers' consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications).

Staff will ensure the setting's designated camera is only used in the setting and any images taken will not be emailed as it may not be secure. (In some instances, it may be required to seek parental permission to email images, but the potential risks must be made clear to parents).

Staff will ensure that children are appropriately dressed, and that they do not use the child's name with an image on a photograph.

Staff will ensure that parents personal cameras are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our setting without prior explicit written consent from the setting, for example, for a special event, such as Christmas plays.

Staff will ensure that all images are stored securely and password protected. Where images are stored the setting will register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), in accordance with data protection laws.

Where professional photographers are used DBS, references and parental consent will be obtained prior to photographs being taken.

Ensure 'acceptable use' rules regarding the use of cameras by children are embedded in practice.

Staff will ensure that the use of cameras, webcams and CCTV is closely monitored and open to scrutiny. (Information on the use of CCTV can be found on the ICO website)

### **Mobile phone and camera policy**

Astbury Merecats Out Of School Club is committed to ensuring the safety of children in its care. We recognise the importance of having a club mobile phone for communication purposes, but are aware that inappropriate use of mobile phones in the club could cause a risk to children

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working within the club, both indoors and outdoors. Failure to comply with this policy, may result in disciplinary action.

#### **Club mobile phone**

The club has its own mobile phone, so we can be contacted by parents or anyone else wanting to speak to us. The phone has the facility to record messages but does not have a camera.

The club mobile phone will be taken with us on outings, so we are contactable away from the club and we are able to make outgoing calls.

### **Personal mobile phones,**

Where it is essential for staff to make a personal call during a session, they should (with the agreement of the manager) make this from the club mobile phone. Personal mobile phones are not allowed on the premises. This protects staff from being distracted from their work and from allegations of inappropriate use. Staff must give the club telephone number to their next of kin, in case it is necessary for the staff member to be contacted in an emergency during working hours.

### **Mobile phones belonging to older children**

Parents of older children who may need to bring a mobile phone into the club, must sign to say they give permission for the mobile phone to be stored away at the club. The phone must be handed over by the child's parents, switched off and stored in our locked cupboard and then handed back to parents at the end of the session.

The club will display a notice advising visitors and parents / carers that mobile phones are not to be used in the setting. If a visitor or parent / carer is seen using their mobile phone, they will be asked to use it away from the setting.

### **Photographs**

One of the best ways to support children's development and record children's activities and achievements, are through photographs. When joining the club, parents / carers are asked to if they give permission, for their child to be included in photographs. The club has its own camera that is used for this purpose, camera or video functions on personal mobile phones must not be used in the setting.

### **Internet safety:**

On setting equipment we ensure that appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place.

### **Working off setting premises:**

Where staff take setting computer/digital equipment / or records in paper form, off setting site, they do so with the view that they abide by the staff GDPR Policy

Staff are reminded that information, both in paper or electric form, is sensitive and protected under data protection and GDPR and should be safe and securely stored off the premises and during transport, laptops and mobile phones must be password protected.

### **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy**

At Astbury Merecats we respect the privacy of the children attending the Club and the privacy of their parents and carers, as well as the privacy of our staff. Our aim is to ensure that all those using and working at Astbury Merecats can do so with confidence, that their personal data is being kept secure.

Our lead person responsible for data protection is NH. The lead person ensures that the club meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), liaises with Statutory bodies when necessary and responds to any subject access requests.

## **Confidentiality**

Within the club we respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- We will only ever share information with a parent about their own child
- Information given to staff by parents about their child, will not be shared with third parties without permission unless there is a safeguarding concern (as highlighted in our Safeguarding Policy)
- Concerns or evidence relating to a child's safety, will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within the club, except with the Designated and deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Staff will only discuss individual children for the purpose of planning and observations
- Staff are made aware of the importance of confidentiality during their induction process
- Issues relating to the employment of staff, whether paid or voluntary, will remain confidential to those making personnel decisions
- All personal data is stored securely in a locked cupboard or information stored on the computer is password protected
- Students on work placements and volunteers are informed of our Data Protection policy and are required to respect it.

## **Information that we keep**

The items of personal data that we keep about individuals are documented on our personal data matrix. The personal data matrix is reviewed annually to ensure that any new data types are included.

**Children and parents:** We only hold the information necessary to provide a childcare service for each parent. This includes a child's personal and emergency information (such as name, date of birth and address), medical information / allergies, parent contact information, attendance registers, incident and accident records etc. Once a child leaves the club, we will retain only the data required by statutory legislation and industry best practice, and for the prescribed periods of time. Electronic data that is no longer required is deleted and paper records are disposed of securely.

**Staff:** We keep information about employees in order to meet HMRC requirements and to comply with all other areas of employment legislation. We retain the information after a member of staff has left our employment for the recommended period of time, then it is deleted or destroyed as necessary.

## **Sharing Information with third parties**

We will only share information with outside agencies on a need-to-know basis and with consent from parents, except in cases relating to safeguarding children, criminal activity, or if required by legally authorised bodies (e.g. Police, HMRC etc.). If we decide to share information without parental consent, we will record this in the child's file clearly stating our reasons.

We will only share relevant information that is accurate and up to date. Our primary

commitment is to the safety and well-being of children in our care. Some limited personal information is disclosed to authorised third parties we have engaged to process it, as part of the normal running of our business, for example to manage our payroll and accounts. Any such third parties comply with the strict data protection regulations of the GDPR.

### **Subject access requests**

- Parents / carers can ask to see the information and records relating to their child and/or any information that we keep about themselves
- Staff and volunteers can ask to see any information that we keep about them
- We will make the requested information available as soon as practicable, and will respond to the request within one month at the latest
- If our information is found to be incorrect or out of date, we will update it promptly
- If any individual whom we hold data has a complaint about how we have kept their information secure, or how we have responded to a subject access request, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office

### **GDPR**

We comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Act (GDPR), regarding obtaining, storing and using personal data.

Written in accordance with the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(2017\): Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Information and record](#)

### **10.0 Allegations against staff**

“Registered providers must inform Ofsted or their childminder agency of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). Registered providers must also notify Ofsted of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider, who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence”.

*Para.38. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017*

Support and advice is sought from Children's Services or the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), and our Personnel/Human Resources advisor whenever necessary.

At Astbury Merekat we recognise the possibility that adults working in the setting may harm children; that they may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children

Any concerns of this nature, about the conduct of other adults, should be taken to the Manager without delay or, where that is a concern about the Manager, to the Chair of Committee/Owner and the LADO.

Staff are aware that this must be done on the same working day.

The setting will not internally investigate until instructed by the LADO.

We make all staff aware of their duty to raise concerns. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. They have been made aware of those other channels of support outlined in our whistle blowing policy.

### **Whistle blowing policy**

Astbury Merecats is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability. If a member of staff discovers evidence of malpractice or wrongdoing within the club, they can disclose this information internally without fear of reprisal. Our Whistle blowing policy is intended to cover concerns such as:

- Financial malpractice
- Failure to comply with legal obligation / danger to health and safety or the environment

This policy must not be used to question business decisions made by the club, or to raise any other matters that are covered under other policies (e.g. discrimination or racial harassment). Any allegations relating to child protection will follow the procedures set out in the Safeguarding policy.

### **Raising a concern**

Ideally the staff member should put his or her allegations in writing, setting out the background to the situation, giving names, dates and places where possible and the reason why they are concerned about the situation.

In the first instance concerns should be taken to the Club's manager. If due to the nature of the problem, this is not possible, contact your local play work advisor for advice.

If this person or body is unwilling or unable to act on the concern, the staff member should then raise it with:

- Ofsted (if it concerns the safe and effective running of the club).
- The Local Authority Designated Officer, or the Local Safeguarding Children Board (If it concerns a child protection issue and is not already covered by the procedures set out in the clubs Safeguarding policy)
- Ultimately with the police (If a crime is thought to have been committed).

If the member of staff is still uncertain about how to proceed with the concern, he or she should contact the whistle-blowing charity PCAW (Public Concern at Work) for advice.

### **Responding to a concern**

Initial enquiries will usually involve a meeting with the individual raising the concern, and will decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If a concern relates to issues which fall within the scope of other policies, it will be addressed under those policies.

If the initial meeting does not resolve the concern, further investigation is required. The appropriate person will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days where feasible, or if this is not possible, giving a date by which, the final response can be expected. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and who to contact if the member of staff is unhappy with the response and wishes to take the matter further.

### **Rights and responsibilities of the whistle- blower**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and the Club will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness.

If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person.

If the investigation concludes that the member of staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person.

### **Contact Information**

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer- (Cheshire) 01270 685904 or 01606 288931  
(Staffordshire)- 0800 1313126 or 0345 6042886

## **11.0 Safer Recruitment**

The setting pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2020 and with reference to the 'Position of Trust' offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the setting who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. We do this by:

- Operating safe recruitment practices; including highlighting the importance we place on safeguarding children in our recruitment adverts and interview questions, appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and reference checks, verifying identity, academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining practitioner references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and checking the Children's List and right to work in England checks in accordance with DBS and Department for Education procedures



- Ensuring that staff and volunteers adhere to a published code of conduct and other professional standards at all times, including after setting activities. Staff are aware of social media/ on-line conduct
- Ensuring that all staff and other adults on site are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with children and parents, following the Code of Conduct
- Requiring all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). [Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 \(amended following the 2018 Regulations\)](#). Staff are asked to complete ‘Staff Suitability’ forms on a regular basis.
- Maintaining an accurate, complete, up to date Single Central Record

### **12.0 Staff training and updates:**

In our setting there is a commitment to the continuous development of all staff, regardless of role with regard to safeguarding training:

All staff undertake Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership (CESCP) ‘endorsed’ Basic Awareness in Safeguarding and Child Protection training within the first term of their employment/placement. This training is refreshed every 3 years; to enable them to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

The Designated Lead and any Deputy attend (CESCP) multi agency Safeguarding and Child Protection training on an annual basis.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, and/or Deputy attend the Designated Safeguarding Leads Meetings held each term coordinated by the SCiES Team, therefore enabling them to remain up to date with Safeguarding practices and be aware of any emerging concerns/themes within Cheshire East. Due to current COVID-19 Pandemic, the Early Start and SCiES Team are reviewing ways in which their training can be delivered in a different way and arrangements will be shared in due course.

The setting acknowledges serious case review findings and shares lessons learned with all staff to ensure no child falls through the gaps.

### **13.0 Cared for children (Looked after children)**

In Astbury Merekat we ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep Cared for Children safe as we are aware that children often become cared for as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We have identified a designated lead for our Cared for Children; this person works closely with the Virtual school.

#### **14.0 Children with special needs and disabilities**

We ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special needs/disabilities.

These barriers can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We aim to build the necessary skills in staff so that they can safeguard and respond to the specific needs of this group of children.

#### **15.0 The use of 'reasonable force'**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in settings to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. Settings will need to ensure staff are appropriately trained, that all incidents must be reported and fully recorded in a different way to the way in which safeguarding incidents are reported and recorded. This is detailed in our Behaviour policy.

#### **16.0 Private Fostering**

We recognise that our setting has a mandatory duty to report to the local authority when we become aware of, or suspect that, a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. To aide our awareness we ensure that we establish parental responsibility for each and every child; we take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child when we register them.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, we recognise that they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately

fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or are involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of private fostering arrangements, they are aware that they need to notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform Cheshire East. The setting would also inform Checs of the private fostering arrangements.

### **17.0 Specific safeguarding issues**

**All** staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues. They are aware that these safeguarding issues may not directly involve the child in our setting but could be happening to their siblings or parents. They are also aware that some issues could be happening in the lives of staff members.

Staff are supported in accessing and completing the relevant screening tools.

As a listening setting staff would pick up on these issues and would know how to identify and respond to:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse
- Child sexual exploitation / trafficked children
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- County Lines
- Extremism and Radicalisation
- Children missing from education
- Domestic abuse
- Peer relationship abuse/Teenage Relationship Abuse
- Risky behaviours
- Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Sexual health needs
- Obesity/malnutrition
- On line grooming
- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying, including homophobic, racist, gender and disability. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010
- Self Harm
- Honour based abuse including - Female Genital Mutilation, Breast Ironing, Forced Marriage
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Mental Health
- Modern Day Slavery

- Upskirting
- Children with family members in prison
- Homelessness

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

**An overview of specific safeguarding issues and our response are provided within appendix 6.**

### **18.0 Owner/Committee Responsibilities**

The Owner/Committee fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with Government guidance.

The Owner/Committee have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the setting:

- Has robust Safeguarding procedures in place
- Operates safe recruitment procedures and appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and adults working on the setting site
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site
- Has a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with Safeguarding and Child Protection issues
- Takes steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to Safeguarding arrangements
- Is supported by the Owner/Committee nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Manager; this is the Chair
- Carries out an annual review of the Safeguarding policy and procedures
- Carries out an annual Safeguarding Audit in consultation with the Owner/Committee.

### **Finally:**

Staff in Astbury Mere take the safeguarding of each and every child very seriously. This means that, should they have any concerns of a safeguarding nature, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected. This is never

an easy action, nor one taken lightly. They are aware that it can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times staff have the child at the heart of all their decisions and act in their best interests.

Further information on our safeguarding and related policy documents and procedures is available on request from the Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **Staff behaviour policy (Code Of Conduct)**

### **Conduct at work**

Astbury Merecats expects all employees to behave in a normal and reasonable manner, examples of the type of conduct that the company would expect are listed below:

- To be punctual for the start of work and to keep within the break times
- To give regular attendance at work and to minimise all absenteeism
- To be courteous, helpful and polite to all those with whom they have contact
- To devote all their time and attention, whilst at work to the company and ensure that all its property including confidential information, records, equipment, information technology etc., is kept safe and used correctly
- To comply with all of Astbury Merecats rules and regulations and to observe and perform all the terms of their employment, as set out or referred to in your Contract of Employment
- Not to be involved with any company, client or agent who is in direct competition with Astbury Merecats. Staff are expected to devote all their loyalty to this company

### **Conduct outside of work**

Normally Astbury Merecats has no jurisdiction over employee activity outside working hours. Behaviour outside working hours will only become an issue if the activities adversely affect the club.

Adverse publicity, bringing the company name into disrepute, or actions that result in the loss of faith in the club, resulting in loss of business, or loss of faith in the integrity of the individual, will result in the disciplinary procedure being instigated.

The detriment suffered by the company will determine the level of misconduct and it will also determine which disciplinary stage is most appropriate to suit the circumstances.

If the actions cause extreme embarrassment or serious damage to the club's reputation or image, a decision may be taken to terminate the employment.

## **Uncollected child policy**

Astbury Merecats will ensure that all children are collected by a parent or carer at the end of each session. If a child is not collected at the end of a session, and the parent or carer has not notified us that they will be delayed, we will use the following procedures:

### **Up to 15 minutes late**

- When the parent or carer arrives, they will be reminded that they must call the club to notify us if they are delayed
- The parent or carer will be informed that penalty fees will have to be charged (unless the delay was genuinely unavoidable)

### **Over 15 minutes late**

- If a parent or carer is more than 15 minutes late in collecting their child, the manager will try to contact them using the contact details on file
- If there is no response from the parent or carer, messages will be left requesting that they contact the club immediately. The manager will then try to contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by at least two members of staff
- When the parent or carer arrives, they will be reminded that they must call the club to notify us if they are delayed, and that penalty fees will have to be charged (except in exceptional circumstances)

### **Over 30 minutes late**

- If the manager has been unable to contact the child's parents or carers after 30 minutes, the manager will contact the local Social Care team for advice
- The child will remain in the care of two of the club's staff, on the club's premises if possible, until collected by the parent or carer, or until placed in the care of the Social Care team
- If it is not possible for the child to remain at the club's premises, a note will be left on the door of the Club informing the child's parent or carer where the child has been taken (e.g. to the home of a staff member or into the care of a safeguarding agency) and leaving a contact number. A further message will be left on the parent or carer's telephone explaining events

### **Managing Persistent Lateness**

- The manager will record incidents of late collection and will discuss them with the child's parents or carers. Parents and carers will be reminded that if they persistently collect their child late, they may lose their place at the Club.

### **Useful Contacts**

ChECS : 0300 123 5012

Emergency Duty Team: 0300 123 5022

## **Visitor Policy**

Astbury Merecats Out Of School Club happily welcomes visitors, however there may be times where limitations may be placed to protect children and staff and also to avoid disruption. We would therefore advise visitors to book in advance, to ensure the correct member of staff is available. Currently due to Covid-19 guidance visitors can be shown around the club outside of our opening hours.

Astbury Merecats reserves the right to refuse entry to any person, which we may have reasonable doubt of their identity. In instances where parents are separated, parents with parental responsibility have the right to attend the setting, unless a court order is placed restricting contact or accessibility.

All visitors to the Club must sign the visitor's book and give the reason for their visit and wear a visitor's badge. Visitors will never be left alone with the children. The manager must advise visitors of all fire exits and the meeting point and if a fire drill is planned for that day.

If a visitor has no reason to be on the Club's premises, we will escort them from the premises. If the visitor refuses to leave, we will call the police. In such an event an Incident Record will be completed, and the manager will be immediately notified. Security procedures will be regularly reviewed by the manager, in consultation with staff and parents

### **When answering the door**

- Staff must check the identity of any visitors they do not recognise, before letting them into the club
- Authorised persons to collect must be checked within children's details and password given to anyone who it has been agreed between parents and staff can collect
- Visitors must sign in and out in the visitor's book
- Visitors must not be left unsupervised, by a member of staff at any point
- Parents / carers are reminded not to let other visitors in, whether they know them or not



## **Complaints policy**

At Astbury Merecats we aim to work in partnership with parents to deliver a high-quality childcare service for everyone. If for any reason we fall short of this goal, we would like to be informed in order to amend our practices for the future. Our complaints policy will always be displayed on the premises. Records of all complaints will be retained for a period of at least three years. A summary of complaints is available for parents on request.

The manager will generally be responsible for dealing with complaints. If the complaint is about the manager, the registered person or other senior member of staff will investigate the matter. Any complaints received about staff members will be recorded on an Incident log and a Complaints log will be completed. Any complaints made will be dealt with in the following manner:

### **Stage one**

Complaints about aspects of club activity:

- The manager will discuss the matter informally with the parent or carer concerned and aim to reach a satisfactory resolution. Complaints about an individual staff member:
- If appropriate the parent will be encouraged to discuss the matter with staff concerned.
- If the parent feels that this is not appropriate, the matter will be discussed with the manager, who will then discuss the complaint with the staff member and try to reach a satisfactory resolution.

### **Stage two**

If it is impossible to reach a satisfactory resolution to the complaint through informal discussion, the parent or carer should put their complaint in writing to the manager. The manager will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the letter within 7 days.
- Investigate the matter and notify the complainant of the outcome within 28 days.
- Send a full response in writing, to all relevant parties, including details of any recommended changes to be made to the club's practices or policies as a result of the complaint.
- Meet relevant parties to discuss the club's response to the complaint, either together or on an individual basis.

If child protection issues are raised, the manager will refer the situation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will then contact Social Care and follow the procedures of the Safeguarding Children Policy. If a criminal act may have been committed, the manager will contact the police.

### **Making a complaint to Ofsted**

Any parent or carer can submit a complaint to Ofsted about Astbury Merecats at any time. Ofsted will consider and investigate all complaints.

**Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M12WD**  
**Telephone: 0300 123 1231 (general enquiries)**  
**0300 123 4666 (complaints)**

**(Further policies are available to be read within the club)**

