**Saplings – Multi-agency policy.**

Childcare and education are changing and developing, working to enhance the quality and provision for the improved outcomes of children at the same time as working flexibly with parents and external agencies. The future is about working within a multi-agency approach which means working with a variety of professionals in the delivery of services for young children.

**Practitioners**

Our well-trained workforce is key to meeting the challenges and providing a quality service to children and families. Occupational and personal development supports the knowledge and autonomy that is needed for an effective team within the setting.

**Links with support services and other agencies.**

We are committed to working with other agencies and support services as we believe that linking with others regarding: The early Years inclusion team (SEND Referral), Special Educational Needs, Social care, Health, Developmental issues, and exchanging information is in the best interests of the children.

Parental consent will always be obtained before children are referred to other professionals or before records are shared or transferred. Where consent is not given we will strive to have an ongoing dialogue with parents and to work to meet the child’s needs.

The setting has established administrative links with Speech and Language clinics, (Being a member of the Every Child a Talker program) The Specialist Teacher Service, Health Visiting Service, and Educational Psychologist and Paediatric services. We are able to access a variety of further agencies through the children’s center services in the local area.

The setting’s understanding of the triage procedures gives confidence to parents who access their services regularly.

We are also able to work with Joint Agency Teams for families with children with special educational needs. They are made up of multi-professional teams working

Together with parents/carers identify and assess the needs of individual children. We encourage parents to maintain their multi-agency communication and respect that they are the foremost educator of their child.

**The Common Assessment Framework**

CAF is a framework for an initial needs assessment that can be used by the whole children’s workforce. The CAF has been designed specifically to help assess unmet needs at an earlier stage before they become complex and entrenched. It is an important tool for early intervention and can help practitioners and parents/carers develop more of a shared understanding of a child’s needs

**Review**

The CAF aims therefore to provide all practitioners with a holistic tool to identify a child or young person’s needs and a shared language for addressing them. It provides a common structure for recording information and thus sharing information between practitioners and in this way aims to ensure that important needs are not overlooked and that children and young people are not subject to a multitude of assessments or multiple referrals to a range of services. Practitioners working with the same child or young person will use the CAF to develop a shared understanding of the child and their family that will inform decisions about the required next steps.

The CAF is not a means of referral to other agencies.

**Observation and Assessment.**

Within the setting continual observations provide the foundation information for developmental assessment and progression. Our key person system enables staff to develop relationships with families and carers to work in partnership for the improved outcomes of the children. Setting roles such as Health and Safety Officers are Jo Warwick and Casey Parker, Designated persons for Safeguarding and Child Protection- Josephine Warwick and Casey Parker, Senco- Stephanie Wood enable a structure for key persons to use as a point of reference for concerns and challenges as they may arise.

**Key Principles of multi-agency/professional collaboration.**

* Ensuring that the child and their family are at the heart of the process and are fully involved and consulted throughout.
* That the consent of the parent and the child, if of age or sufficient understanding to give consent, is always obtained.
* Support is provided at the first sign of difficulty and not when a child is in serious difficulty or crisis.
* That support is focused on the strengths as well as the needs of the child and their family.
* That the welfare of the child is paramount.

**National relevance**

* Every Child Matters 2003
* Children’s Act 2004
* Child Care Act 2006
* Disability Discrimination Act 1995
* Special Needs Code of Practice 2001
* Revised early years foundation stage 2012
* Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (Children in care)
* Equalities act 2010
* EYFS 2012/2014

Reviewed on 01/02/2022

By Jo Warwick and Casey Parker