

# **RAINBOW PLAY THERAPY**

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**January 2014**

Rainbow Play Therapy helps children aged 4-14 with emotional and behavioural difficulties through play therapy sessions, which enable the children to make sense of their life experiences.

Rainbow Play Therapy believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by a commitment to practice which protects them from abuse and other forms of harm.

**This policy applies to all staff working for or on behalf of Rainbow Play Therapy.**

### **Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

### **Rainbow Play Therapy recognises that:**

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, their parents, carers, teachers and other agencies is essential in safeguarding children from harm.

### **The purpose of this policy is:**

- To provide protection for all children who receive Rainbow Play Therapy services.
- To establish Rainbow Play Therapy's roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
- To set out Rainbow Play Therapy's procedures in the event we suspect a child may be experiencing or is at risk of harm.

### **We will seek to safeguard children by:**

- listening to them and respecting and valuing them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, making all necessary checks to ensure all have received full and enhanced DBS (CRB) clearance before working with children.
- sharing details of child protection good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.**

**ELAINE TAYLOR-WHIFFEN, Director, Rainbow Play Therapy.**

# RAINBOW PLAY THERAPY CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

January 2014

These procedures apply to anyone working for or on behalf of Rainbow Play Therapy who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child.

## **Purpose and aim**

We aim to ensure every child who attends Rainbow Play Therapy sessions and any other children who may come to its attention receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse or any other form of harm.

The organisation should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for Rainbow Play Therapy to respond to any suspected or actual abuse or harm of a child in accordance with these procedures.

These procedures provide clear direction to staff at Rainbow Play Therapy if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

## **Definitions of different types of abuse**

**Physical abuse** is violence causing injury or occurring regularly during childhood. It happens when:

- a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut.
- someone tries to drown or suffocate a child.
- someone gives a child poison, inappropriate drugs or excessive levels of alcohol.
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material.
- involving children in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

**Emotional abuse** is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child love and affection.
- regularly making the child feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means.
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child.
- being so over-protective towards the child that he/she is unable to develop or lead a normal life.
- exploiting or corrupting a child, eg by involving him/her in illegal behaviour.
- conveying to a child the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or his/her only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

**Neglect** involves persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene, education and emotional support are met.
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This can include lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

**If a child tells you he/she or another child is being abused:**

- Reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next. If a child discloses during a Rainbow Play Therapy session that he/she is being abused, **you must end the session immediately**. Transfer the child to the care of an appropriate adult. If the disclosure occurs during a Rainbow Play Therapy session at the child's school, **immediately** contact the school's Child Protection Officer. Otherwise **immediately** call the duty social worker in the relevant Children's Social Care team:  
**Cambridgeshire** 0345 045 5203 (8am-5pm Monday-Friday). Outside these hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 01733 234724.  
**Suffolk** 0808 800 4005 (manned from 8am-6.45pm Monday-Friday). Outside these hours the call is automatically diverted to the Emergency Care Team.  
Then call the parent/carer explaining that you have had to do this.
- Do **not** question the child about the disclosure or try to investigate their allegation.
- Do not contact the child again until after the case has been closed.

As soon as appropriate after following these procedures, speak to your clinical supervisor.

**If a child is in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention:**

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, use first aid to help the child.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child's family and the local authority children's social care department. If you have involved the police and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision. **Consider the welfare of the child as the highest priority in your decision –making.**

**If a parent/carer fails to collect the child after a play therapy session having arranged to do so:**

Call the parent/carer to find out whether collection of the child is imminent.  
If it is not, call the designated emergency contact to come and collect.  
If they are unable to collect, call the Children's Social Care team.

**Record keeping**

In the event of a disclosure of abuse or potential abuse, clear accurate records ensure there is documented account of Rainbow Play Therapy's response. This will provide an essential tool for any other agencies or individuals who are responding to the incident.

In the event of a disclosure or incident, fill in the following form:

## Rainbow Play Therapy Incident Form

<b>Private &amp; Confidential Details of the Child and their Parents / Carer:</b>		
Name of Child:		
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Age:	Date of Birth:
Parent's / Carer's name(s):		
Home address:		
<b>Your Details:</b>		
Your Name:	Your Position:	Date and Time of incident:
<b>Report:</b>		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else.	If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the club/organisation/group;	
Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant information (describe any injuries / whether fact, opinion or hearsay):		
The Child's account, of what has happened and how:		
Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident / injury.		
Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident(s):		
Signed..... Date.....  Name of signatory..... Date.....  Signed..... Date.....  Name of signatory..... Date.....		

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

## **Useful contact details**

**Child Protection Officer, Rainbow Play Therapy:** Elaine Taylor-Whiffen

**Suffolk Police:** Non-emergency numbers **101** or **01473 613500**

**Cambridgeshire Police:** Non-emergency numbers **101** or **01480 456111**

**Suffolk Social Care Team:** **0808 800 4005** (manned from 8am-6.45pm Monday-Friday). Outside these hours the call is automatically diverted to the Emergency Care Team.

**Cambridgeshire Social Care Team:** **0345 045 5203** (8am-5pm Monday-Friday). Outside these hours call the Emergency Duty Team on **01733 234724**.

**NSPCC Helpline:** **0808 800 5000** or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**ChildLine:** **0800 1111** or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)