Child Protection Policy – Gardening Club

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1. Purpose
This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children attending the after-school gardening club. We aim to provide a safe, supportive, and enjoyable environment where children can learn and participate in gardening activities free from harm.

2. Scope
This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, helpers, and visitors involved in the gardening club, and covers all children under the age of 18 attending sessions.

3. Guiding Principles

- The safety and wellbeing of every child is our top priority.
- All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult involved in the club.
- Concerns about a child's welfare will always be taken seriously and acted upon.
- We will work in partnership with parents, carers, and relevant authorities.

4. Specific Risks in a Gardening Setting
In addition to general safeguarding risks, the gardening environment presents specific considerations:

- Use of tools (e.g., trowels, forks, shears)
- Outdoor and potentially unsupervised spaces
- Contact with soil, plants, and wildlife
- Physical activities such as digging, lifting, and watering
- Changing weather conditions

Appropriate supervision, safety guidance, and risk assessments will be in place at all times.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL and DDSL):** Responsible for safeguarding procedures, managing concerns, and liaising with external agencies.
- **Club Leaders and Volunteers:** Ensure children are supervised at all times, follow this policy, and report concerns immediately.
- **All Adults:** Maintain safe behavior, model appropriate conduct, and prioritize children's wellbeing.

6. Safe Recruitment

- All staff and regular volunteers will undergo appropriate background checks (e.g., DBS checks).
- References and identity checks will be obtained.
- Safeguarding expectations will be clearly explained during induction.

7. Supervision and Ratios

- Appropriate adult-to-child ratios will be maintained at all times.
- Children will never be left unsupervised in the garden area.
- Clear boundaries will be set for where children can and cannot go.

8. Code of Conduct
All adults must:

- Treat children with respect, patience, and fairness.
- Avoid being alone with a child in secluded areas (e.g., sheds, greenhouses).
- Ensure physical contact is appropriate and necessary (e.g., guiding safe tool use).
- Use encouraging and appropriate language at all times.
- Never engage in rough play, inappropriate behavior, or favoritism.

9. Use of Tools and Equipment

- Children will receive age-appropriate instruction on safe tool use.
- Tools will be checked regularly and stored safely when not in use.
- Close supervision will be provided when tools are in use.
- Protective equipment (e.g., gloves) will be provided where necessary.

10. Reporting Procedures

- Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- Concerns should be recorded in writing, including dates and details.
- If a child is at immediate risk, emergency services (999) must be contacted.
- The DSL will liaise with local safeguarding authorities where necessary.

11. Accidents and First Aid

- A first aid kit will be available at all sessions.
- At least one trained first aider will be present.
- All accidents and injuries will be recorded and reported to parents/carers.

12. Photography and Media

- Photos or videos of children will only be taken with parental consent.
- Images will be stored securely and used appropriately.
- Children’s full names will not be shared alongside images.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Personal information will be handled in line with data protection laws.
- Information will be shared only when necessary to protect a child.

14. Training and Awareness

- All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Regular updates and refreshers will be provided.

15. Behaviour Management

- Positive behaviour will be encouraged through praise and clear expectations.
- Any challenging behaviour will be managed calmly and respectfully.
- Physical punishment or humiliation is strictly prohibited.

16. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or after any safeguarding incident.
- Improvements will be made based on feedback and best practice.

17. Contact Information

- Sarah Vittle **DSL** and the **DDSL** are Catherine Bordoli & Simon Sleeman.
- Emergency Services: 999

Guidance
Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership protocols and guidance and their procedures
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
FGM Act 2003 Mandatory Reporting Guidance (2016)