

# Child Protection Policy

Our nursery will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Child protection is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other nursery policies and procedures.

Little Treasures Nursery has a clear commitment to safeguarding children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the Child Protection Officer at the earliest opportunity.

**The legal framework for this policy is based on:**

- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007
- Protecting of Children (Scotland) Act 2003

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The nursery has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child. North Lanarkshire Documentation and files will be used at all times when recording any concerns.

### **The nursery aims to:**

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff.
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest.
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to share information and seek the help that the child may need.
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the safeguarding policy and procedure, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures including the local Child Protection Committee's guidelines.
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the local Child Protection Committee's guidelines.
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do.
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Child Protection Board.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

### **Contact telephone numbers**

- Care Inspectorate (formerly SCSWIS/ the Care Commission) 01382 207100
- Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) 01382207101
- NLC Child Protection Committee 01698 452859
- NLC Social Work Locality 01236 638700

### **Types of abuse**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### **Indicators of child abuse**

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones.
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies.
- Aggressive behaviour.
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents.
- Repeated injuries.
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

### **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

- Staff should make an objective record (supported by the nursery manager) of any observation or disclosure and include:
  - Child's name
  - Child's address
  - Age of the child and date of birth
  - Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
  - Exact words spoken by the child
  - Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
  - Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
  - Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time
  - Any discussion held with parent(s)/guardians.

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. It is important to remember this because any subsequent investigation by the relevant authorities must not be ruined by staff putting words in the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have concerns about with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not comment either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

### **Physical abuse**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or

reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the nursery manager.

### **Fabricated illness**

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented as having an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

### **Procedure:**

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into nursery or that occur during time at the nursery, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there are any queries regarding the injury, it will be immediately reported to the nursery manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the local authority Child Protection Team.

### **Sexual abuse**

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language.

This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge, and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for

them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing, the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

**Procedure:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be immediately reported to the nursery manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Emotional abuse**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill-treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations on children. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them or becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

**Procedure:**

- The concern should be discussed with the Child Protection Officer, in her absence the Proprietor.
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to the Child Protection Officer who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Neglect**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at nursery unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at nursery. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

**Procedure:**

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to the Child Protection Officer who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Staffing and volunteering**

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The nursery will therefore not allow an adult who has not received their Disclosure Scotland check clearance to be left alone with a child.

We ask all new staff to register with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment and receive initial basic training during their first week. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

We have a named person within the nursery who co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The designated person undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The named person regarding child protection at the nursery is: **Christina Saville**.

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
- Applicants for posts within the nursery are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information

- All Disclosure Scotland checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children. We ask all staff requiring updated checks to join the PVG scheme
- We abide by the Care Inspectorate requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the nursery or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- All students will be requested to join the PVG scheme
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the nursery and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the nursery, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All staff have access to a whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will attend regular staff meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within the nursery allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

### **Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Child Protection Team does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Child Protection Team.

### **Support to families**

- The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery.
- The nursery continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Child Protection Team with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

**Employees, students or volunteers of the nursery or any other person living or working on the nursery premises**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the nursery premises, regardless of whether the allegation relates to the nursery premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The incident will be dealt with by the Manager or Proprietor with support from the Child Protection Team:

- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals to determine how this will be handled.
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation.
- All investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities.
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with professional support and advice.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. The Care Inspectorate will be notified immediately of this decision.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

National Care Standards-

Health and Wellbeing, Standard 3  
 Support and development, Standard 6  
 Involving other services, Standard 10  
 Confidence in staff, Standard 12  
 Well-managed service, Standard 14

Signature	Position	Date