Child Protection Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:

Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup

1. Statement of Purpose

1.1
Within the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting we are committed to improving the life chances of children in our care. We acknowledge that the child's welfare and wellbeing are paramount and that we have a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding our children.

1.2
The following policy provides guidance for all setting staff and follows the National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2021, updated 2023 (http://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/documents/.) For ease of reference, we will use the term 'the guidance' when referring to this document throughout the policy. The sole focus of this policy is the protection, safety, and welfare of children and young people includes unborn babies, and children and young people under the age of 18 years. Throughout this guidance the term 'parents' is used to include all main caregivers and the term 'staff' is used to include all volunteers and students.

2. The Context for Child Protection

2.1
The National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021, updated 2023.This non-statutory Guidance describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children in Scotland and replaces the 2014 version. It outlines how statutory and non-government agencies should work together with parents, families, and communities to prevent harm and to protect children from abuse and neglect. The Guidance promotes partnership between those who care about and have responsibilities for the child, and entails a collaborative approach between professionals, carers and family members. A key change in the 2021 Guidance is to reflect the greater integration of child protection within the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) continuum and use GIRFEC language and core components to frame identification and proportionate responses to child protection concerns within the National Practice Model. The Guidance outlines the continuum of support for all children, from universal support through to protection from significant harm, underlining that the wellbeing and safety of children are indivisibly connected. There is a clear articulation of the importance of GIRFEC to protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time. The leadership of Children's Services Planning Partnerships will therefore be instrumental in supporting implementation of this Guidance within the broader context of local GIRFEC practice.
It is supported by a suite of other policies and should be seen in the wider context of *GIRFEC* the *Early Years Framework* (2009) and *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*. It is supported by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.* The Guidance has a strengthened focus on children's rights, engagement and collaboration with children and families, and on building on strengths. It incorporates the experiences and views of children, young people and families and includes a greater emphasis on ensuring that a child's views are considered in all decision-making that affects them. These views have also informed the development of the series of Practice Insights published alongside the Guidance, ensuring a central focus on the child's voice and perspective.

The 2021 Guidance builds on the four-part structure of the 2014 Guidance although Part 2B is new. All sections are revised and supplemented. Children's rights and human rights underpin the whole.

2.2

Please note: In addition to any in-house child protection procedures, it will usually be necessary for the setting and their Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) to follow local multi-agency child protection procedures, guidelines, and agreements as appropriate. Local authorities are required by law to produce their own child protection guidance/procedures. If you are affiliated to the local authority, you should give due regard to these and refer to them within your own setting's policy.

Every ELC service should have a child protection co-ordinator taking lead responsibility for child protection, in liaison with the head of establishment, to whom he/she will report. The child protection officer should also engage with appropriate training and development in order to be able to respond effectively to child protection concerns, to support staff and to share learning.

3. Responsibility

3.1

It is the duty of everyone involved in early years to safeguard the welfare and interests of the children. Child protection is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and families and having a skilled and competent workforce, along with relevant guidance and procedures, ensures that children can be protected. Everyone working with children and their families, including all professionals, volunteers, and members of the community, need to appreciate the important role that they play in being vigilant and providing robust support for child protection. see Part 2A Roles and Responsibilities for child protection

3.2

We have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child. Staff will be expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share appropriate and relevant information and concerns with other agencies, and work collaboratively with the family and other services to secure safer outcomes for the child. Everyone has a job in making sure children 'are alright' and in particular recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time. National Risk Assessment Toolkit is a resource which integrates the GIRFEC National Practice Model in a generic approach to assessment of risk, strength, and resilience in the child's world. Our ELC setting will use this guidance to support practitioners in identifying and acting on child protection risks in children and young people.

Our ELC establishment is responsible for ensuring that all staff are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing.

3.3

Everyone has a role in protecting children from harm. In order to enable staff to fulfil their obligations, all staff will complete Child Protection training at the appropriate level to their

role within the setting. We will ensure that there is a designated Child Protection officer with overall responsibility for child protection. They will be responsible for ensuring all relevant procedures are followed when a child protection case arises. Confidentiality will be protected, but where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be at risk of harm, relevant information will be shared with key partner agencies. Staff will not investigate any concerns but will gather initial information and establish basic facts such as what happened, when, where and by whom. All concerns should be shared without delay.

The Promise encourages a focus on support for those relationships that are key to emotional safety and resilience. “When children talk about wanting to be safe, they talk about having relationships that are real, loving and consistent.” Early years staff will help all children build resilience, and where they are vulnerable, make sense of their situations and recover from trauma.

Where staff in early years have a concern about a child’s wellbeing, they will discuss this with the child’s Named Person in health, usually the health visitor. Where concerns about possible harm or abuse arise, these should always be shared with the appropriate agency (normally social work or police).

Practice guide to chronologies is available from the Care Inspectorate.

4. Types of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. In a child protection context, there are four different types of abuse that can be identified:

- Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child.
- Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.
- Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented.
- Child neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use. See guidance” Protecting rights, protecting children: signposts to Convention Articles” Pages 224/225 Appendix E: United Nations Convention On the Rights Of The Child

Further information on types of abuse and neglect can be found in the Guidance page 12 – 14 and Appendix 1 of this policy. Other indicators of risk that may affect some children include Domestic Abuse, Problem Alcohol Use and Parental Substance Misuse. For further information on these and other indicators of risk see the Guidance Pages 33 - 36.

5. Procedures

All staff have a role in relation to child protection. It is imperative that the appropriate procedures are followed in relation to Reporting, Recording and External Agency Recording. Staff need to understand their own role and the roles of other services when responding to concerns about a child.

The GIRFEC National Practice Model provides shared practice concepts within assessment and planning. Practitioners should be familiar with the core elements such as the 'SHANARRI' wellbeing indicators, the My World Triangle, and the resilience matrix. Together they support holistic analysis of safety and wellbeing, dimensions of need, and the interaction of strengths and concerns.

All of the agencies involved in protecting children must gather the information they have on individual children at risk into a chronology of key events and contacts, review it regularly and make sure that it is passed on to the professional with the lead role in protecting the child. The professional with the lead role must co-ordinate this into a multi-agency chronology on a regular basis.

See guidance Part 2B: Approach to Multi-Agency Assessment in Child Protection

6. Reporting

6.1 Staff must report any concerns they have about a child to the designated Child Protection officer within the setting. Concerns about a risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation may arise in a number of ways including:

- When a child indicates or discloses harm, because of what the child has said.
- When a third party, family or anonymous source discloses the possibility of harm.
- When you are concerned that a child is or may be being harmed. In response to a particular incident.
- When you have witnessed because of direct observation or heard something that causes you concern about a child's safety.

Practitioners with child protection concerns may share relevant information in order to:

- clarify if there is a risk of harm to a child
- clarify the level of risk of harm to a child
- safeguard a child at risk of harm
- clarify if a child is being harmed
- clarify the level of harm a child is experiencing
- safeguard a child who is being harmed

All staff working in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings, have a key role in the support and protection of children and young people. All staff must be aware of, and must follow, child protection procedures in place, providers must ensure staff have a clear

understanding of their responsibilities, and to respond appropriately.

6.2
You will not be asked to investigate any concerns of potential harm whether they are reported to you by another person or are identified and raised by you personally. If a staff member has child protection concerns about a child these should be discussed with the CPC. All relevant information must be reported without delay and the Child protection co-ordinator will decide subsequent action. The concern must be placed in the context of available observed and recorded information about the child, their needs, and circumstances.

It is the role of designated police, social work, and health staff to consider whether there may be a risk of significant harm, and if so, to progress necessary action through child protection procedures. This will include careful consideration and a plan for how to communicate with the child and family, including where there is no further action required

6.3
Initial information should be gathered, and basic facts established, that relate to the concern, namely what, where, when and by whom. This will include suspicions or indicators of significant harm (Appendix 1) and/or direct information of concern for a child. All information must be recorded on the Chronology Form (Appendix 2). The Child Protection Report Form (CPRF) (Appendix 3) may be completed depending on the circumstances. This may be held in-house, or sent to external agencies, as deemed appropriate.

Concerns about possible harm to a child from abuse, neglect or exploitation should always be shared with police or social work, without delay. Appendix H within the guidance, is a checklist to support efficient communication of essential information

7. Recording

It is important to record all information about children and their families within the Child Protection Chronology (see Appendix 2). This will ensure a record of all facts and procedures that have been followed, as well as agencies that have been spoken to or consulted, with as appropriate. When completing the CPRF form (see Appendix 3) only facts will be recorded, including what has actually been said by a child or another person. The actual words used must be recorded, as well as details of the time, place and any other relevant information.

8. External Agency Reporting

The Child Protection Co-ordinator will make the decision when to report to external agencies with regards to concerns relating to the safety of a child and child protection. Staff may be required to cooperate and work with multi-agency colleagues in responding to and supporting children and families, who may be subject to ongoing child protection procedures and responses. The process of responding to child protection concerns in diagrammatic form can be found on p130 of the guidance.

Notification of Concern: Where concerns about possible harm to a child arise, these should always be shared with the appropriate agency (normally police or social work) so that staff responsible for investigating the circumstances can determine whether that harm is significant. Where a practitioner has a concern about a child's wellbeing, this can be shared with a named person (or equivalent) where this has been discussed with the family

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children from harm. Practitioners and managers in statutory services and the voluntary sector should all understand when and how they may share information. Further information on Information Sharing: Inter-Agency Principles can be found on p27 of the Guidance

Also see guidance page 155 section 4.147 Reporting concerns.

Anyone who sees a person physically punishing/assaulting their child can:

• call the police on 101
• contact local authority social work
• call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 (anonymously) who will report to police
• as has always been the case, call 999 if a child or young person is in immediate danger
Prompts in Appendix H may be useful for persons calling social work or police

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of Catherine Abbot (manager) to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented. This will be achieved through both formal and informal observation of staff practice, regular review of the setting's child protection practices, procedures and paperwork and child protection training for all staff as a team.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Indicators of Abuse
Appendix 2 – Child Protection Chronology
Appendix 3 – Child Protection Report Form

See also

Outings Policy
Use of ICT Policy
Confidentiality Policy

Nappy Changing Policy
Responsive Care Policy
Safe Recruitment Policy
Complaints Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Staff Development Policy
Tracking Children's Progress Policy

Links to national policy

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Child Protection Guidance 2021 (theapsgroup.scot)

National guidance for child protection committees undertaking learning reviews

Home - The Promise

Health and Social Care Standards My Support, my life (Scottish Government 2017)
www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 3: Best Interests of the Child)
www.unicef.org.uk

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 16 March 2021.
Once commenced, the Bill will incorporate the UNCRC. The Bill will support the delivery of a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland and a fundamental shift in the way children's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled in Scotland.

Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter (Scottish Executive 2004)
~~www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/04/19082/34410~~
https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20150219072535/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/04/19082/34410

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and other relevant legislation
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright

Getting Our Priorities Right (Scottish Government)
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/04/2305
The Common Core of Skills
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/5565

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents

Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019
www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/16/enacted

Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP) Scottish Government 2016
https://beta.gov.scot/policies/child-protection/child-protection-improvement-programme/

Find out more

Children 1st – Scotland's National Children's Charity
www.children1st.org.uk/help-advice/

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland
www.cypcs.org.uk/about

NSPCC Learning - All the tools, training and resources you need to keep children safe
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/?_ga=2.207962065.2134587175.1536322681-1325448261.1536322681

Publication - Factsheet
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (The Scottish Government, 2018)
https://beta.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences/

National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People This document is a national risk assessment 'toolkit' for child protection to support practitioners in identifying and acting on child protection risks in children and young people

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 1

Indicators of Abuse

This list of indicators is not exhaustive, nor is it mutually exclusive.

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inappropriate/inadequate clothing
- Unkempt and general waif-like look
- Untreated illnesses
- Exposure to danger; lack of supervision
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns - particularly if recurrent
- Inconsistent and/or improbable excuses given to explain injuries or untreated injuries
- Reports of punishment which seem excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact; over reaction to sudden movement of adults
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Site of bruise not normally associated with play
- Failure to thrive
- Untreated injuries

Sexual abuse

- Itching in the genital area
- Soreness in the genital area
- Unexplained rashes or marks in the genital area
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Stained or bloody underclothes
- Recurrent tummy pains or headaches
- Bruises on inner thigh or buttocks
- Frequent masturbation (many young children masturbate occasionally for comfort/experimentation)
- Inappropriate language for a pre-school child
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge for a pre-school child

- Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- Wariness of being approached by anyone, possibly combined with a dazed look
- Regression to younger behaviour
- Distrust of a familiar adult; anxiety about being left with adults
- Sexually explicit play with toys and other children

Emotional abuse

Emotional neglect is often difficult to detect and can occur by itself, or in conjunction with physical abuse. It may also occur when a child is physically well cared for.

- Overly withdrawn child
- Overly aggressive child
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting
- Persistent rocking movement
- Very poor language development
- Inability to relate to peers or adults
- Fear of new situations
- Parental attitude to child

Other possible signs are:

- Significant lack of growth
- Weight loss
- Hair loss
- Poor skin and muscle tone
- Circulatory disorders
- Lethargy

It is important to recognise that some of the signs and symptoms could arise from other causes. Ask for explanations of any injury. Consider the explanation in conjunction with the developmental age of the child. In addition to recording information about a child's actions, it is also useful to take notes of anything a child says which is indicative of neglect or harm.

All agencies that deliver child services and work with children and families have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child. They are expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share information and concerns with other agencies to improve outcomes for the child. the National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021.

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 2

Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup

Chronology

Child's Name: **D.O.B.:** **Carer's Name:**

Date Chronology Started: **Child's Key Person:**

Signature/Date	Observations and Discussions	Agreed actions/persons spoken to:

Signature/Date	Observations and Discussions	Agreed actions/persons spoken to:

Child Protection Policy – Appendix 3

Child Protection Report Form

Portobello Toddlers Hut Playgroup

Please indicate what you are reporting:

- I have concerns that abuse may be occurring
- I was involved with an incident with a child
- I was witness to an incident with a child
- I have received an allegation of abuse
- A child has told me that they are being abused

Important Information:

Your name:

Your telephone number:

Name of child concerned:

Capacity in which child is known to you:

Information relating to the child:

Date of birth:

Home address:

Carer:

Is the child already known by Social Work?

(If yes, enter name and contact details of Social Worker)

Is the main carer aware of this referral?

(If no, please explain why)

Nature of Concern or Incident

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

Designation: .....

Action Taken

Please indicate which of the following actions have been taken:

- Concern/incident recorded in the child's Chronology
- Child Protection Record form completed
- Child Protection Record Form Kept on file – no referral made (please give reasons for decision)
- Child Protection Record Form passed to external agencies (please specify which agencies)

Signed: …..... (CPC) Date: ….....

Signed: …..... (Manager) Date: ….....