

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



We have a clear policy, procedure and guidelines that we are required to follow to safeguard and protect children, based on the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014.

This Child Protection Policy aims to ensure Liberty Kids:

- Adheres to the National Guidance for Child Protection 2014
- Embeds the GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) model into its culture
- Includes the Health and Social Care Standards 2017
- Looks at the UN convention on the Rights of the Child
- Identifies and responds to Child Protection and Wellbeing concerns
- Informs staff on how to deal with a Child Protection and Wellbeing Concerns

This policy and all procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

“All Children have a right to protection from being hurt, and from violence, abuse and neglect”

(United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19)

The core principles of this policy are embedded in the GIRFEC approach:

- Promoting the wellbeing of individual children and young people. This is based on understanding how children and young people develop in their families and communities, and addressing their needs at the earliest possible time.
- Keeping children and young people safe. Emotional and physical wellbeing is fundamental and goes wider than child protection.
- Putting the child at the centre. Children and young people should have their views listened to and they should be involved in decisions that affect them.
- Taking a whole child approach. Recognising that what is going on in one part of a child or young person’s life can affect many other areas of their life and wellbeing.
- Building on strengths and promoting resilience. Using a child or young person’s existing networks and support where possible.
- Providing opportunities to celebrate diversity. Children and young people should feel valued in all circumstances and practitioners should create opportunities to celebrate diversity.
- Providing additional help that is appropriate, proportionate and timely. Providing help as early as possible and considering short and long-term wellbeing needs.
- Supporting informed choice. Supporting children, young people and families in understanding what help is possible and what their choices may be.
- Working in partnership with families. Supporting, wherever possible, those who know the child or young person well, know what they need, what works well for them and what might be less helpful.
- Respecting confidentiality and sharing information. In accordance with the legal framework, sharing information that is relevant and proportionate to safeguarding children and young people’s right to confidentiality.
- Promoting the same values across all working relationships. Recognising respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience and integrity are qualities valued by children, young people, their families and colleagues.

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- Making the most of bringing together each worker's expertise. Respecting the contribution of others and co-operating with them, recognising that sharing responsibility does not mean acting beyond a worker's competence or responsibilities.
- Co-ordinating help. Recognising that children, young people and their families need practitioners to work together, when appropriate, to provide the best possible help.
- Building a competent workforce to promote children and young people's wellbeing. Committed to continuing individual learning and development and improvement of inter-professional practice.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to investigate where they have 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm'.

Liberty Kids has a duty to report or seek advice from the local authority if we have any concerns about child abuse.

Our designated Child Protection officer is our Manager, who will have received Child Protection training and is responsible for liaison with the local authority and police in any child protection situation.

If staff, have concerns regarding a child protection issue this is the only instance where the local Child Protection Team and Health Visitor will be contacted without parental permission. Once contact has been made with the Team, staff will inform parents of the action and reasons for concern.

Concerns

All staff complete Child Protection training upon induction into Liberty Kids and should treat any concerns seriously:

- Where there is suspected or actual abuse, report your concern to the Manager or Senior Lead Practitioner without delay.
- This includes any allegation about a staff member.
- Trust your own professional judgment: if you are concerned about a child, other professionals will almost certainly be concerned.
- Report earlier rather than later contact with Health Visitors can be made: most serious incidents of child abuse started with comparatively minor incidents that were not noticed or not reported.
- Reassure and comfort the child concerned.

If we have evidence that leads us to suspect a child at the nursery is at risk of potential or significant harm the procedure states the following: -

Immediate Action

All suspicions and allegations of child abuse MUST be immediately referred by the designated person to social work / police on the following numbers:

- 01343 554370 (Child Protection Moray - during office hours)
- 03457 565 656 (Social Work - Emergency Out of Hours)
- 101 (Police Scotland)

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- They will also advise you as to other professionals such as the child's named person the health visitor who will be likely to be involved in each case.
- We work with parents/carers in partnership whenever possible, however child protection issues will take precedence over working in partnership as the interests of the child are paramount.
- Depending on the nature and extent of concern, the Local Authority has the legal duty and responsibility in all these matters to decide whether they are to investigate further.

Staff Training

Staff receive regular training in child protection. All staff are trained in child protection upon joining Liberty Kids

We work to safeguard children by:

- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/carers, and staff.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/carers and children appropriately.
- following careful procedures for recruitment of staff, working alongside the Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment document and obtaining PVG certificates from Disclosure Scotland, and two references for all staff before starting employment.
- providing effective staff training, supervision, support and management.
- providing a code of conduct for all staff, volunteers and students to adhere to.
- a clear complaints policy.

As the manager and Senior Lead Practitioners, when concerns are brought to your attention you should:

- Maintain full factual records, which must be kept confidential (in a sealed envelope, locked in a drawer or filing cabinet), dated, and signed.
- Ensure the records are accurate, complete and include:
 - Any injuries/concerns/issues observed.
 - The alleged abuse.
 - The explanations offered.
 - Messages received and given, by whom, dated and in what circumstances.
 - Child's full details.
 - Family details.
- Make any referrals needed following the agreed referral procedure.
- Ensure that concerns are kept confidential, following the guidelines in the Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards.

Allegation Against a Staff Member, Volunteer or Student

- We try to make sure that staff are not on their own with children at any time, whenever possible, for their own protection and that of children.
- Volunteers and students are not permitted to be left alone with children at any times.

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- If an allegation has been made against a member of staff, volunteer or student, the Manager, must manage this in the same way as already outlined for external allegations and concerns.

If the allegation is against the Manager, then another member of the team must report it directly to the local authority.

- The staff member(s) are immediately suspended pending further investigation following statutory procedures and an internal investigation will run parallel with any investigation and in line with SSSC codes of conduct.
- The Local Authority can be contacted on 01343 557222 for advice in these matters.
- SSSC must also be informed.

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- There is a designated member of staff who has attended a child protection training course and is responsible for liaison with child protection agencies in any child protection situation at Liberty Kids.
- All staff receive induction into the Child Protection Policy within their first week and are able to implement the policies and procedures.
- The local authority is informed of any allegations of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer or any abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises.

We are committed to reviewing the Child Protection Policy and practice at regular intervals. The policy is shared with parents/carers when their child first attends the setting.

CONSENT & CONFIDENTIALITY:

Research and experience has shown that keeping children safe from harm requires professionals to share information. However, such information sharing must take place within a framework of both common and statute law.

The Common Law duty of confidence requires that personal information kept by professionals and agencies should not be disclosed without the consent of the subject unless disclosure is necessary to safeguard a child. Disclosure should be justified in each case.

The Human Rights Act 1998 includes the right to respect for private and family life and an infringement of this right is only acceptable in certain circumstances on of which is the prevention of the rights and freedoms of others.

As a result of the above legislation, professionals should only share information without the consent of parent/carers if permission seeking would place the child at risk of significant harm.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN & FAMILIES:

Liberty Kids will ensure that at first contact families will be made aware that has a child protection policy to protect all children from harm and is therefore required by law to inform the Local Authority/Social Work team of any suspicion of abuse.

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- At all times during the process of safeguarding children, practice should involve minimising distress to the child and ensuring that families are treated with sensitivity and respect.
- Parents/carers require support, and asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility rather than parenting failure.
- Parents/carers and carers should be kept fully informed at all times, unless to do so would jeopardise the safety and welfare of the child. It is important to remember that the child and family may require continuing support and services and, as far as possible, professionals should work in a way, which will promote a constructive working relationship with the family in the future.

Anybody who believes that a child is suffering significant harm should always refer their concerns to the local authority.

The following definitions of child abuse may help in deciding whether a referral is needed:

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or other causing harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as “fabricated or induced illness”

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may mean conveying to children that they are worthless, or unloved, inadequate. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration (e.g. Rape and buggery) or non – penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

NEGLECT:

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. It may involve a parent carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or

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treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

However, if there are any doubts you must raise this with the Manager.

Safe Recruitment - Disclosure Certificates/PVG for Staff and Volunteers

All staff or volunteers who are employed or recruited must be selected and vetted appropriately. All staff and volunteers are required to obtain a PVG before they are allowed to work with the children. This Certificate must be checked and the details confirmed. A note of the date of issue should be made so this is on your records.

(See: Recruitment & Retention Policy for further details)

Child Protection - Training/Development

All staff must attend the internal Child Protection training session within their first month of employment. It is also advised that all staff/volunteers attend refresher sessions and it is updated annually unless there have been any significant changes in legislation or policy that requires individuals to update their knowledge earlier.

“ I, am protected from harm, neglect, abuse bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities”

(Health and social Care Standard 3.20)