**Child Protection Policy **

*National guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) states that abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. The definition gets broken down further into four specific categories namely, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.*

*This policy runs alongside and supports Renfrewshire Councils Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People – Standard Circular 57*

*As well as Little Pandas Safeguarding and Protecting Young Children Guidance for Session 2022 - 2023*

At Little Panda’s, our main objective is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. We are committed to working in partnership with families as well as undertaking an inter-agency approach to ensuring the best interests of every child using our service are met.

We have a named person within the nursery who co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The child protection officer for Little Panda’s Nursery is the Nursery Manager the Deputy Manager when the Manager is not in the building and or the room seniors.

**Legal Framework and Guidance**

* The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007
* Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
* Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
* Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach
* National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014
* The Early Years Framework
* UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
* The Children’s Charter
* Renfrewshire Council Standard Circular 57

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. The nursery is aware that abuse does occur in our society, and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our early learning and childcare practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care, we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there is a problem. They may be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child 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 with other agencies, including as part of multi-agency team where needed, in the best interest of the child.

**Outline**

* Little Panda’s and its team members have a duty to report any significant concern about a child to the Manager and or Depute Manager.
* Every team member at Little Panda’s has a responsibility to familiarise themselves with child protection issues and concerns, whilst having a duty to report and record any injury or series of injuries, change in behaviour or treatment of a child, which causes them to believe the child is at risk, whether at home or in the nursery.
* The starting point for considering any risks that may be present in the life of a child is for staff to use the ‘***Getting it right for every child’*** ‘My world triangle’ (See appendix 1 of policy)
* If, at any time, a team member believes there is a cause for serious concern, information will be passed onto the Manager (depute manager in manager’s absence) who may need to share this information with outside agencies, e.g., local police and/or Renfrewshire Council Social Work. *Parents will be involved at all stages unless this would increase the risk to the child.*
* Children’s safety is paramount. All team members at Little Panda’s must attend available training on recognising and responding to child protection issues. Renfrewshire Council Part 1 Child Protection Training (or equivalent) on child protection is compulsory for all staff along with compulsory annual update.

**Staffing**

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. 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, they are required. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the nursery.

* We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all 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 applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* All staff appointments will be subject to safer recruitment procedures. We abide by the Care Inspectorate requirements regarding 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 children.
* All staff appointments will be subject to a 6-month probationary period and will not be confirmed unless the Management Team of Little Panda’s is confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children.
* 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 led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
* All staff have access to and comply with the 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 supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support.

**External Agencies**

* Any external agencies invited to work with the children, e.g., baby sensory instructors, language teachers will require to be provide an original copy of a recent Enhanced Disclosure or PVG check before being authorised to work in the nursery.
* Visitors (e.g., dentists, local fire department) and/or helpers who assist in the nursery will not be left unsupervised at any time. Those visitors/parent helpers, who visit the nursery on a regular basis, will be required to agree to PVG checks.
* Visitor badges must always be worn by visitors to the building so that they are easily identified as a visitor to the setting after signing the visitors book.

**Monitoring children’s attendance**

Parents should please inform the nursery prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the nursery on the day or prior recorded on the Famly App, so the nursery management are able to account for a child’s absence.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children but enables children’s attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

If a child has not arrived at nursery within one hour of their normal start time the parents will be messaged or called to ensure the child is safe and healthy (the decision to message or call is based on the child’s normal attendance). If the parents are not contactable then further emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absence will immediately be reported to the Child Protection Co-Ordinator to ensure that the child remains safeguarded.

**Child Protection Procedure for Staff**

*If you have any concerns about a child’s welfare or direct evidence or suspicion of a child being at risk, the only way you protect the child or children is to report the concern. Please use ‘My World Triangle’ as a starting point when considering risks linked to a child.*

**A concern prompted by any of the following should be reported according to the procedures set out below:**

* A specific incident.
* A disclosure made by a child or parent or carer.
* Information from a third party.
* Adult behaviour or circumstances that may place the child at risk of harm.
* Child behaviour or circumstances that may place he child at risk of harm; or
* A culmination of minor concerns over a period
1. Alert the manager (depute manager in manager’s absence) of your concerns immediately and record the incident on appendix 3 for record of the report and management to follow appendix 2 from standard circular 57.
2. Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure (supported by the nursery manager).

This record should include all fields on appendix 3 should such:

* 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 (where appropriate)
* Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen (where appropriate)
* Exact observation of any incident including any other witnesses (where appropriate)
* Name of the person to whom any concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time
* Any discussion held with parent.

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager or deputy, dated and kept in the child’s personal file which is under management supervision.

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 compromised by staff putting words in the child’s mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure, details must be logged accurately.

1. Pass your report to the manager for countersigning.
2. Follow the guidance of the manager in supporting the child and co-operate with any subsequent actions if required by social work/and or police etc.

**The Child Protection Manager will follow Appendix 2:**

1. Contact the local duty social work team to report concerns and seek advice (if it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police)
2. Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised
3. Speak to the parents (unless advised not to)
4. The Child Protection Manager will follow up action taken by Social Work Team if they have not contacted the setting within the statutory timeframe

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the Child Protection Manager or deputy they should call social work or the child protection team directly and report their concerns.

Child Protection Telephone Numbers:

* Emergency Number 0300 343 1505
* Renfrewshire: Paisley, Renfrew & Johnstone social work 0300 300 1199
* Non-emergency Police 101

Reviewed on: August 2022 by: Management

 Jennifer McNaughton

 Jen Mahon

**Appendix 1 – My world triangle**



**Appendix 2 – 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
* Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents
* Repeated injuries
* Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

* Low self-esteem
* Wetting and soiling
* Recurrent nightmares
* Aggressive behaviour
* Withdrawing communication
* Habitual body rocking
* Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
* Over-friendliness towards strangers
* Excessive clinginess
* Persistently seeking attention.

**Peer on peer abuse**

We are aware that peer on peer abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area.

**Physical abuse**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been physical harm or 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 or room leader.

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

**Fabricated or induced 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.

**Sexual abuse**

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

**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 or causing them to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting 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.

**Neglect**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of 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 because of maternal substance abuse.