Litte Pandas - Child Protection Policy

The **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)** recognises that abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Child abuse is generally categorised into four main types: **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect**.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Renfrewshire Council **Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People – Standard Circular 57**
- Little Pandas **Safeguarding and Protecting Young Children Guidance** (Session 2025–2026)
- Current Renfrewshire Child Protection Procedures
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023)

At **Little Pandas**, the welfare, wellbeing and rights of every child are our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where children are protected from harm and supported to reach their full potential.

We recognise that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, Renfrewshire Council, Health Services, Police Scotland, Social Work and other relevant agencies to ensure that the best interests of every child remain at the centre of all decisions. We follow the principles of **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** and work collaboratively with other professionals whenever concerns arise.

The nursery has a designated **Child Protection Coordinator** who is responsible for coordinating child protection and safeguarding matters within the setting. This responsibility rests with the **Nursery Manager**. In the Manager's absence, responsibility transfers to the **Deputy Manager**. If neither is available, staff must seek support from the most senior member of staff on duty and, where there is an immediate concern for a

child's safety, contact Social Work or Police Scotland without delay. Every member of staff has an individual responsibility to report concerns and should never delay taking action if they believe a child may be at risk of harm.

Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is informed by the following legislation and national guidance:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)
- Health and Social Care Standards
- Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice
- Renfrewshire Council Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People – Standard Circular 57
- Current Renfrewshire Child Protection Procedures

Little Pandas is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child in our care. We have robust procedures in place to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to promote their health, wellbeing and development.

We recognise that abuse can occur in any family, community or setting regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or social background. Our practitioners remain vigilant to the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect and understand their responsibility to respond appropriately to any concern.

As early learning and childcare professionals, our staff are in a unique position to notice changes in a child's behaviour, presentation or wellbeing. Due to the close relationships formed with children and families, staff may be the first people to identify concerns or receive information that suggests a child may be experiencing harm.

The welfare of the child is always our primary consideration. All members of staff have a professional and legal responsibility to act promptly and appropriately where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

Staff do **not** need proof that abuse has occurred before reporting a concern. Any concern, however small, must be reported immediately in accordance with this policy.

Little Pandas is committed to working openly and collaboratively with partner agencies, sharing information appropriately and lawfully where it is necessary to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of a child. The safety and protection of children will always take precedence over issues of confidentiality where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of harm.

Outline

Little Pandas is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. All staff, students, volunteers and visitors have a responsibility to protect children from harm and to respond appropriately to any concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing.

- Every member of staff has a duty to report any concern about a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing immediately to the **Nursery Manager** or, in their absence, the **Deputy Manager**.
- All staff have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with current child protection legislation, national guidance and nursery procedures. They must remain vigilant to signs and indicators of abuse or neglect and report any concerns, including injuries, changes in behaviour, concerning disclosures or patterns of concern, whether these arise within the nursery or from information relating to a child's home or wider environment.
- Staff should use the **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) My World Triangle** (Appendix 1) to support their observations and professional judgement when considering a child's wellbeing. The My World Triangle is a tool to assist assessment and recording and must never delay the reporting of child protection concerns.
- Where a member of staff believes there is reason to suspect that a child may be at risk of harm, they must report their concern immediately to the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager. The designated Child Protection Coordinator will seek advice from, or make referrals to, the appropriate agencies, including Renfrewshire Social Work and Police Scotland where necessary. Parents and carers will normally be informed of concerns unless doing so would place the child or another person at increased risk or compromise a child protection investigation.
- The safety and wellbeing of children is paramount. All staff are required to complete Child Protection training appropriate to their

role, including Renfrewshire Council Child Protection Training (or an equivalent recognised programme), together with regular refresher training and updates to ensure their knowledge remains current.

Staffing

Little Pandas is committed to providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment for every child. Robust safer recruitment procedures are followed to ensure that all adults working within the nursery are suitable to work with children.

All individuals undertaking regulated work with children must hold the appropriate **Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme membership** in accordance with current Scottish legislation before commencing their role within the nursery.

All new staff receive safeguarding and child protection induction as part of their initial employment. This includes recognising the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, responding appropriately to disclosures, recording concerns accurately, reporting procedures and understanding their individual safeguarding responsibilities. Staff will complete child protection training appropriate to their role within the timescales required by Renfrewshire Council and will participate in regular refresher training.

The nursery will ensure that:

- Appropriate staffing levels are maintained to meet the individual needs of all children.
- All recruitment follows safer recruitment procedures, including verification of identity, references, employment history, qualifications, PVG Scheme membership and any other suitability checks required by legislation and the Care Inspectorate.
- All appointments are subject to a probationary period during which the individual's suitability to work with children is continually assessed.
- Where required by legislation, the nursery will fulfil its legal responsibilities to make referrals to Disclosure Scotland where an individual has been removed from regulated work with children due to child protection concerns.
- All staff have access to, and are expected to follow, the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns about the conduct or practice of colleagues without fear of discrimination or victimisation.

- Staff receive regular supervision and support sessions, providing opportunities to discuss safeguarding practice, professional development and any additional training needs.

External Agencies and Visitors

Little Pandas works in partnership with a range of external professionals and organisations to enhance children's learning and wellbeing. Safeguarding arrangements apply equally to all visitors and external agencies.

- Where external professionals or organisations undertake regulated work with children, the nursery will seek appropriate assurance that all safeguarding and PVG requirements have been met before children are left in their care.
- All visitors must sign the Visitors' Book on arrival and departure and wear a visitor badge at all times whilst on the premises.
- Visitors will remain supervised by a member of nursery staff unless appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed and unsupervised access has been agreed by the Nursery Manager.
- Parent helpers, students, contractors and volunteers will always work under appropriate supervision unless all relevant safeguarding requirements have been satisfied.
- The nursery reserves the right to refuse access to any individual where safeguarding requirements have not been met or where concerns exist regarding the safety or welfare of children.

Monitoring Children's Attendance

Regular attendance is important for every child's wellbeing and helps us to ensure that all children expected to attend the nursery are safe and accounted for.

Parents and carers are asked to inform the nursery in advance of any planned holidays or absences wherever possible. Any unexpected absence, including illness, should be reported to the nursery by telephone or recorded on the Famly App before the child's usual start time where possible.

We recognise the importance of children spending quality time with their families. Recording children's attendance is part of our safeguarding

responsibilities and enables us to account for every child expected to attend the nursery.

If a child has not arrived within one hour of their expected start time and no reason for their absence has been received, nursery staff will contact the child's parent or carer by telephone or message. If contact cannot be established, the nursery will attempt to contact the child's emergency contacts to establish the child's whereabouts and ensure their wellbeing.

Where there are existing safeguarding concerns, or where a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, Child's Plan or is currently involved in a child protection referral, any unexplained absence will be reported immediately to the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager. Advice will then be sought from **Renfrewshire Council Social Work** and, where appropriate, **Police Scotland**, in accordance with local Child Protection Procedures.

All attendance concerns, attempted contacts and actions taken will be recorded and retained in line with the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

Child Protection Procedure for Staff

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff has a professional duty to act immediately if they have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. Staff do **not** require proof that abuse or neglect has occurred before reporting concerns.

The **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) My World Triangle** (Appendix 1) should be used to support professional observations and assessment where appropriate; however, it must never delay reporting a child protection concern.

Concerns requiring action may arise from:

- A specific incident or injury.
- A disclosure made by a child, parent or carer.
- Information received from another person or agency.
- Concerning behaviour or circumstances relating to an adult which may place a child at risk of harm.
- Concerning behaviour, presentation or circumstances relating to a child.
- A pattern or accumulation of smaller concerns over a period of time.

Procedure for Staff

1. Report the Concern Immediately

Any member of staff who has concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing must immediately inform the **Nursery Manager** or, in their absence, the **Deputy Manager**.

If neither is available and the member of staff believes a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, they must contact **Renfrewshire Council Social Work** or **Police Scotland** without delay.

The member of staff must complete the nursery's Child Protection Concern Record (Appendix 3). The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager will then follow the reporting procedures contained within **Renfrewshire Council Standard Circular 57**.

2. Recording Concerns and Disclosures

Staff must make an accurate, factual and objective written record of any concern or disclosure as soon as possible after the event.

The written record should include:

- Child's full name.
- Child's home address.
- Date of birth.
- Date and time of the observation or disclosure.
- The child's exact words wherever possible.
- Details of any injuries or marks observed, including their position on the body.
- A factual description of what was seen or heard.
- The names of any witnesses.
- The name of the person the concern was reported to.
- The date and time the concern was reported.
- Details of any discussion held with parents or carers (where appropriate).

Records should be factual and avoid personal opinion, assumptions or speculation.

All records must be signed and dated by the member of staff completing them and countersigned by the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager. Child Protection records will be stored securely within the child's

confidential safeguarding records and access will be restricted to authorised management staff.

Responding to a Disclosure

If a child begins to disclose information, staff should:

- Remain calm and listen carefully.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking.
- Never promise to keep the information secret.
- Avoid asking leading questions or investigating the matter.
- Only ask open questions where clarification is absolutely necessary.
- Explain that the information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible using the child's own words wherever possible.

3. Management Responsibilities

Following receipt of a concern, the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager will:

1. Review the information received and assess the level of concern.
2. Contact **Renfrewshire Council Social Work – First Response Team** to report concerns and seek advice where appropriate.
3. Contact **Police Scotland immediately by calling 999** if it is believed a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or where a crime may have been committed.
4. Record all advice received and actions taken.
5. Inform parents or carers where appropriate, unless advised not to do so by Social Work or Police Scotland, or where doing so may place the child or another person at increased risk or compromise an investigation.
6. Continue to work in partnership with Social Work, Police Scotland and other relevant agencies to safeguard and support the child.

Escalating Concerns

If a member of staff believes that appropriate action has not been taken, or they are unable to report concerns through the normal management structure, they have a professional responsibility to contact Renfrewshire Council Social Work or Police Scotland directly.

Staff may also raise concerns through the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy.

The welfare and safety of the child will always take precedence over concerns regarding confidentiality or professional relationships.

Child Protection Contact Numbers

Renfrewshire Council Social Work – First Response Team

Telephone: 0300 300 1199

Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service
(Evenings, weekends and public holidays)

Telephone: 0300 343 1505

Police Scotland (Non-Emergency)

Telephone: 101

Police Scotland (Emergency)

Telephone: 999

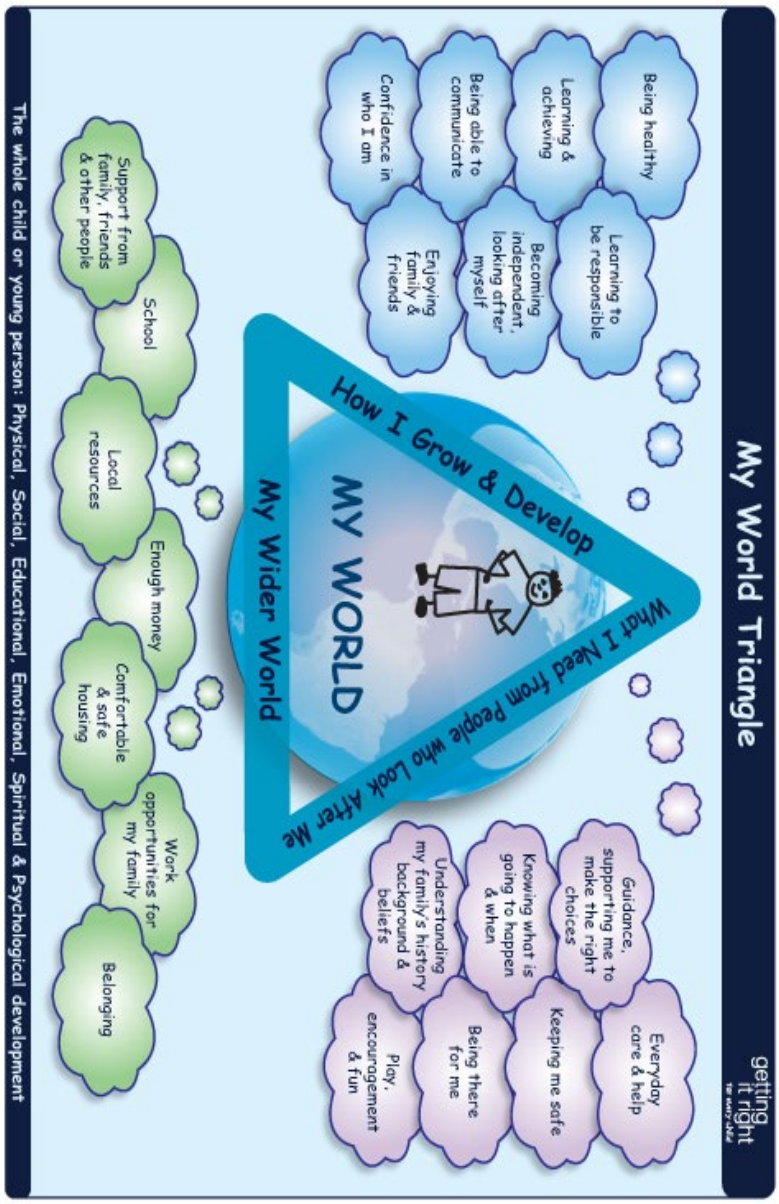
Where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must contact **Police Scotland on 999** immediately. The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager should then be informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

These contact details will be reviewed annually, or sooner if advised by Renfrewshire Council or other relevant agencies, to ensure they remain accurate and up to date.

Reviewed on: August 2026

Reviewed by: Jennifer McNaughton – Nursery Manager

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.