



## Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy

### **Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy Statement**

*“All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their safety is always paramount.”*  
(National guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014)

### **INTRODUCTION;**

All children, whatever their race, sex, beliefs and physical and mental abilities have the right to grow up safe and well, to have the opportunity to develop fully and to have their basic needs met. Child abuse represents a failure to protect the needs and rights of children.

Hyde ‘n’ Seek are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Practitioners should be alert to a child’s needs. If they are concerned about a child, they should seek guidance from the Manager or Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Practitioners should be clear about who they can discuss their concerns with and what action may be required to best support and protect the child. Joint planning and intervention across agencies will help ensure that risks are thoroughly assessed.

All staff and students will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children. The Curriculum for excellence and Pre-Birth to three frameworks promoting health and well being, is also used to support children at all stages to develop and understand the need to protect themselves. Our aspiration for children is to flourish and become;

- Responsible citizens
- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors

All educational establishments and services must take positive steps to help children protect themselves by ensuring that programmes of health and personal safety are central to the curriculum. The curriculum in place should ensure that

children have a clear understanding of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour on the part of another person, no matter whom.

Hyde 'n' Seek create and maintain a positive ethos and climate which actively promotes child welfare and a safe environment by:

- Ensuring that children are respected and listened to
- Ensuring that programmes of health and personal safety are central to the curriculum
- Ensuring that staff are aware of child protection issues and procedures
- Establishing and maintain close working relationships and arrangements with all other agencies to make sure that professionals collaborate effectively in protection children.

## **DEFINITIONS –**

### Who is a child?

A child in Scotland includes those up to the age of 16 years (18 years if the child is subject to compulsory measures of supervision.)

### What is child abuse and child neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child.

## **PRINCIPLES;**

Hyde n Seek Nurseries first priority is the safety and well being of every child. Management of suspected abuse must put the safety of the child first.

- All staff are responsible for the implementation of procedures.
- Prevention of abuse is as important as reacting to suspicions of abuse.
- Management of abuse should always reflect the possibility of criminal investigation and subsequent charges, however the safety of the child has overriding priority.
- The child's views or 'disclosure' should always be listened to and taken seriously

Paramount among these principles is that child protection must be seen within the wider context of supporting families and meeting children's needs through GIRFEC. Getting it right for every child promotes action to improve the well being of all children within eight areas. These well being indicators state that children must be; Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included and above all Safe.

## **GIRFEC:**

- puts children's needs first

- supports assessment, planning, prevention and intervention
- ensures that children are listened to and understand the decisions that affect them
- ensures a skilled, confident and competent workforce who can address needs and risks as early as possible
- identifies a 'named person' as Lead professional to co-ordinate multi agency activity where required.
- ensures that children get the appropriate co-ordinated support needed to promote their well-being, health and development.

*'At the heart of the GIRFEC approach is an emphasis on early, proactive intervention in order to create a supportive environment and identify any additional support that may be required.'* (National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014)

It is an inherent part of the roles and responsibilities of all staff to ensure that improving outcomes for children is a fundamental objective in children getting the help they need when they need it.

### **CATEGORIES OF ABUSE**

For recording purposes five broad categories of abuse have been identified and these are as follows;

- Child Neglect
- Physical Injury
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

### **Child Neglect**

When a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances, which endanger the child.

Signs of possible physical neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent non-attendance or erratic attendance at nursery
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies

- Low self-esteem
- Poor social skills

### **Physical Injury**

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

#### Signs of possible physical injury

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact – flinching
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others

### **Sexual abuse**

When any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks.

#### Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Few or no friends of own age
- Inappropriate play with dolls and peer groups
- Unable to stay awake at nursery
- Low self-esteem
- Self-mutilation
- Fearful of men or adults generally

### **Emotional Abuse**

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

#### Signs of possible emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delay
- Over-reaction to incidents
- Low Self esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Repetitive behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Fear of parents being contacted

## **CHILD PROTECTION NAMED PERSON RESPONSIBILITY**

All Hyde 'n' Seek Nurseries should designate a senior member of staff as responsible for co-ordinating action on child abuse within their establishment. The Manager will also hold this responsibility. However any member of staff suspecting or identifying child abuse should, without delay, contact the Manager, Depute or the Child Protection Co-ordinator, Linda Gordon.

Where the Manager or Child Protection Co-ordinator judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger then she must ensure that Social Work Services are contacted. If it is considered that the child requires immediate medical attention, contact with social work services and police must be made informing them of this. In extreme cases where direct threat or danger exists then you must dial 999 for immediate action. The Manager or Child Protection Co-ordinator will be the first contact for staff who hear a disclosure or identify a child protection concern. They will liaise with other agencies to support investigations and ensure appropriate support for the child. They may also provide appropriate support to staff. The Manager is ultimately accountable for the nursery's actions in response to child protection concerns.

All organisations working with children have an obligation to refer suspicions about the well-being of children to Social Services, who then have a responsibility to make enquiries into the child's welfare and, where appropriate, to conduct a Child Protection investigation. As a Hyde 'n' Seek employee you may be the first link in the Child Protection Chain.

### **Timely and effective action**

All staff will have sufficient training and experience to be alert to signs that children may be in need of help or protection and will take appropriate action to intervene at the point when that help or protection is required. Staff will be alert to the accumulative nature of many child protection issues and will be proactive in recording and reporting any concerns they may have at the stage when these concerns first arise and not merely when the signs and symptoms become more apparent.

It is the responsibility of **all** Hyde 'n' Seek employees to ensure that children get the help they need when they need it and that any intervention on a child's behalf should be timely and effective in addressing any situation where a child may be in need of protection.

In order to facilitate this process Hyde 'n' Seek employees will seek to;

- Establish positive and trusting relationships with the children in their care
- Provide a keyworker as the main point of contact for a child
- Give due respect and understanding to the child's age, ability, family circumstances and ethnic, cultural and religious background.

## **RESPONDING TO THE CHILD**

- LISTEN carefully to the child. Take what he or she says seriously

- REACT CALMLY, do not panic
- DO NOT SHOW DISBELIEF, children seldom lie about abuse
- REASSURE the child that he or she is not to blame and was right to tell
- DO NOT AGREE TO KEEP SECRETS
- TELL the child what action you are going to take, do not make any guarantees of confidentiality regarding the disclosure
- RECORD what was said, in writing, as soon as possible after talking to the child. (Note down how the child was behaving and the way in which he or she told you what happened.)
- ACKNOWLEDGE how difficult it must have been for the child to confide
- AVOID BEING JUDGEMENTAL, do not make assumptions about how it must have been for the child
- REFER

Hyde 'n' Seek will endeavour to seek the least disruptive and least interventionist action consistent with the Child Protection policy, GIRFEC Well being indicators, Glasgow Child Protection Committee Inter Agency Guidance and GCC Circular 57, child welfare and safety.

No matter how good we are at evaluating and assessing matters to do with children we cannot evaluate and assess potential risks as we only know a tiny part of the whole picture. We must always share our concerns with the Manager / Child Protection Co-ordinator.

'No single individual can protect children by acting alone' (Safe and Well 2005)

## **RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS BY STAFF**

If a member of staff has any concerns relating to a child at risk from any form of abuse, the following procedure must be followed:

- Discuss your concerns immediately with the Manager or Child Protection co-ordinator or if they are unavailable, a senior member of staff
- You should consider together whether this information needs to be shared and if so, with whom
- Consider whether an informal discussion with Social Work about the circumstances of the child causing concern is required
- Ensure that the information is accurately recorded with reasons for the decision reached
- Remember that the role of the nursery is to observe, record and report. Investigation is not the responsibility of the childcare service
- Remember that Social Work has a responsibility to provide feedback to the referrer. If this does not happen it is the referring agency's responsibility (nursery) to seek a response and record it
- Ensure that if you cannot contact the appropriate person and there are immediate concerns for the child's safety, contact your Manager, Child Protection Co-ordinator, Social Work or the Police directly

- If an incident occurs after normal working hours, contact should be made with the out of hours Social Work Service on 0800 811 505 or alternatively during day hours 0141 287 8700

If after discussion with the Manager or Child Protection Co-ordinator, the decision is to take this forward as a Child Protection concern, the following will apply:

- The Manager / Child Protection Co-ordinator will make contact with the Social Work Service or the Local Authority Child Protection Team by telephone to discuss the situation
- If the decision is to proceed, the Child Protection Committee referral form should be complete and submitted to the appropriate departments. A copy of the form should be placed in a sealed envelope marked confidential, put in the child's file and stored in a locked cabinet in the office.

The Manager will ensure that the Social Work Officer who was contacted regarding this referral will receive the appropriate written information within 48 hours. Staff involvement may be required further in any subsequent investigation or case conference which takes place.

**If you hear an allegation of child abuse from a third party:**

- Recommend that the person make a report of their allegation to Social Work Services or the Police themselves and then take a note of their allegation, asking for their name and contact details
- Report the allegation to your Manager / Child Protection Co-ordinator
- Record the allegation on a Child Safety Form

**NOTE:** It is possible that employees are implicated in abuse. Disclosure should not be discounted because of the status or role of the alleged abuser. If the Manager is the subject of an allegation, the Director or Senior Manager should be informed and thereafter the nursery's procedures will operate.

**GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS IN CASES WHERE A MEMBER OF HYDE 'N' SEEK STAFF IS SUSPECTED OR ACCUSED OF ABUSING A CHILD**

**If you suspect a member of Hyde 'n' Seek staff has abused a child:**

- Report your suspicion to the Manager immediately (if the suspected person is the Manager, report your suspicion to the Area Manager or the Directors of the organisation.)
- Record your suspicion on a Child Safety Form (Appendix 1)(NB. Normal rules of confidentiality will continue to apply and should be carefully and sensitively handled in instances where a member of staff reports a suspicion against another member of staff. Completed Child Safety Forms should be lodged with the Manager and should not be easily accessible by other staff)

**If it is alleged that a member of Hyde 'n' Seek staff has abused a child:**

- Report the allegation immediately to your Manager
- Record the allegation on a Child Safety Form

**If you are a Manager with responsibility for a service:**

- As Manager, you have the necessary authority to apply a precautionary suspension while an appropriate investigation is carried out – note that a precautionary suspension is **not** considered as confirmation that a member of staff is guilty of any misconduct, nor that any disciplinary procedures will inevitably follow.
- As Manager you should ensure the staff member who is under suspicion or who has had an allegation made against them has no further contact with children while the matter is reported to the Directors of the organisation. Under most circumstances, it would be best to ask the member of staff to go home at least for the rest of the day until a decision is taken on the most appropriate course of action.
- Before a decision is taken to suspend a member of staff as a precautionary measure, the Child Protection Co-ordinator and Directors should be consulted and the employee must be advised of their rights.
- In cases where a member of staff reports a suspicion against another member of staff or student, ensure every step is taken to ensure that both individuals' right to confidentiality is properly observed. Completed Child Safety Forms should not be easily accessible by other staff.
- Management will have responsibility to ensure the suspicion is appropriately investigated and that the person under suspicion has no further contact with children until the investigation has been satisfactorily concluded.

**If you have been accused of an act of misconduct in relation to a child:**

In most instances it is likely that you will be suspended as a precautionary measure while the allegation is investigated. This investigation may be conducted internally or may be referred to the statutory authorities depending on the nature of the allegations and the assessed need for a referral, in line with the terms laid out in the Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy.

Note that precautionary suspension is **not** considered as confirmation that you are guilty of any act of misconduct, nor that disciplinary action will be taken against you.



## **Promoting Child Protection**

Hyde 'n' Seek will aim to make children aware of their right to be safe and to be protected and will seek to make parents and carers aware of its Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Parents and Carers will be encouraged to be involved with the work of the organisation and will have access to all guidelines and procedures as and when requested. We will provide information about who to contact if a member of the community has a concern about a potential child protection issue and any such concerns will be considered seriously and appropriate action taken. We will seek to ensure that children are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues. All involved in the service will be made aware of the organisation's Complaints Procedure and the Care Inspectorate complaints details.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Initiating a Child Protection referral may put pressure on relationships and all reporting procedures should be handled with the highest degree of sensitivity to the child's and the family's needs, and in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism. Staff should seek to minimise any risks by working in collaboration with other staff and other agencies at the earliest possible stage, while recognising the need to share relevant information with the **smallest number of people necessary** to support and maintain the child's safety and well-being. The Manager will have the responsibility to refer the matter to the relevant statutory authority and a clear and positive relationship with families should be borne in mind at all stages of the Child Protection procedure. Where it is appropriate to do so, and does not involve placing the child at further risk, both the child and the family involved should be kept informed of any procedures being undertaken. If in doubt, accept further advice from the statutory authority before divulging details of any potential investigation to the child and/or family.

## **MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Hyde 'n' Seek recognises the right of all children and adults to be treated with trust and respect and acknowledges their right to confidentiality in relation to any information about their own personal or private circumstances.

We also recognise that a child's right to be protected from abuse or harm is of paramount importance and that the protection of the child will override the normal rules of confidentiality. Consequently, where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of abuse or harm all relevant information will be shared with the appropriate Manager and Directors and with any statutory authority called upon to investigate the circumstances of the alleged risk. However, Hyde 'n' Seek will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that information is handled with sensitivity, in line with the Child Protection Policy, and that, beyond those

individuals who need access to the information for child protection purposes, normal rules of confidentiality will continue to apply.

This policy links to;

- Children and young people (Scotland) Act 2014
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)
- Getting it right for every child (2008)
- Additional support for learning act (2009)
- Realising the ambition (2020)
- UN Convention of the rights of the child
- Early Years Framework
- GCC Child protection Circular 57

APPENDIX I

CHILD SAFETY FORM

Strictly Confidential

Updated September 2020

**Child's Details:**

Name..... Date of Birth.....

Address.....

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Have any previous child safety concerns been recorded? YES / NO

**Parent / Carer's details:**

Name(s).....

Address.....

Tel. No .....

Key Worker.....

Line Manager .....

**Details of Child Safety Issue:**

Date..... Time..... Location.....

Has the Child Safety Issue been reported to Manager / Director? YES / NO

**NATURE AND DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT OR CONCERNS;**

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Have you received any information relating to the incident or concerns from any person, ie. The Child, Parent, Carer, Relative, Colleague or other? If yes, give details;

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Do you think the incident merits further action? If so, Why? If not, why not?

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ACTION TAKEN;

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Information passed to;

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Signed..... (person disclosing information)

Date ..... Time.....

Signed.....(Manager/Director)

Date ..... Time.....