



Child Protection Policy

The Indigo Childcare Group will ensure that:

- All members of staff are trained, as part of their induction, in their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children.
- Local knowledge of the Child Protection Team, including out of hours contact numbers, is gathered and maintained.
- All concerns about a child's welfare are passed to the Child Protection Team.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to make all staff aware of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. All concerns regarding child protection will be passed on to the local child protection team. The childcare worker's role is to ensure that their concerns are passed to their manager, not to carry out any investigations or make judgements. We will follow Glasgow Council's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures (copies held at office) to protect and support children and fulfil our professional obligations to report suspicions.

Introduction

Recently there has been a growing awareness within society that children are and have been abused - physically, sexually and emotionally - and that this abuse can cause serious physical and psychological damage. Alongside this growing awareness, there has been an increasing willingness to report instances of suspected abuse. If people who suspect abuse do not report it, the suspicion can never be tested and the child may continue to suffer. While the intention of these guidelines is to heighten awareness of the possibility of abuse, it is important to remember that many injuries caused by accidents are similar in presentation to those caused by neglect or abuse. Similarly, many behavioural reactions can be caused by other upsetting experiences (e.g. bereavement, separation or illness) as well as by exposure to emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Aims and Objectives

Aims:

- 1) The Indigo Childcare Group aims to provide children with relevant information, skills and attitudes to help them resist abuse and prepare for the responsibilities of adult life including home and family. Together with these skills we hope that children will feel confident they can confide in staff on issues of neglect, abuse and deprivation.
- 2) To allow staff to be familiar and confident with the appropriate child protection procedures and issues. This policy is intended to give clear guidance to all staff, teaching & non-teaching on the signs that may indicate the possibility of abuse and the procedures to follow if a child discloses abuse or a member of staff suspects abuse.
- 3) To work with parents to build an understanding of The Indigo Childcare Group responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may

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occasionally require cases to be referred to other investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure.

4) To monitor children who have been identified as 'at risk'.

5) To contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies - thereby contributing towards a more effective detection of the incidence of child abuse.

6) To review The Indigo Childcare Group procedures and improve the way child protection issues are managed.

Objectives:

Child's Development

- The skills will be delivered through the Curriculum and especially via Personal and Social Development programmes (PSD).
- We try to create an environment and ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and they are listened to.
- We provide suitable support and guidance so that children have a range of appropriate adults whom they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- We use the curriculum to raise children' awareness and build confidence so that children have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Staff treat the children with respect and all children are expected to treat each other and staff with respect.
- We look carefully at the role models The Indigo Childcare Group offers children through staffing, materials used, selection of curricular content and other experiences.
- We try to impress upon children the importance of rejecting violence as a means of resolving conflict.
- We regularly review and evaluate our school policies and practices of social control and behaviour modification.
- We give children opportunities to understand, and strategies for coping with stress.
- We give all children the opportunities to learn about child development and good parenting.
- We include, in the Curriculum/PSD programmes information on personal safety.

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What is child abuse?

The term child abuse is used to describe ways in which children are harmed usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. It refers to damage that has been or may be done to a child's physical or mental health. This damage may occur at home, school or within any other environment.

Child abuse can take many forms and can be broadly separated into four categories:-

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

Physical Abuse is usually used to describe situations in which adults:-

- Physically hurt or injure children (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting).
- Give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Attempt to suffocate or drown children.

Physical abuse may also be deemed to occur if the nature of an activity the child is participating in disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body or predisposes the child to injury resulting from fatigue or over use.

Signs of Possible Physical Abuse

Note that bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups. You need to be alert to the following physical indicators:-

- Unexplained marks, bruising or injuries on any part of the body.
- Cigarette Burns
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping, grabbing, and pinching).
- Broken Bones
- Bite Marks
- Scalds

Physical abuse may not always be apparent from bruises, fractures or physical signs. Behavioural indicators, particularly when there are changes in behaviour, can also indicate that abuse is happening. This might be evident from the following behaviours:-

- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Running away.
- Fear of going home.
- Flinching when approached or touched.

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- Reluctance to get undressed (e.g. for bed when being cared for by another adult or for gym).
- Covering arms and legs even when hot.
- Depression.
- Withdrawn behaviour.

Neglect is sometimes the most difficult form of abuse to recognise. It can go unnoticed for a long time; yet can have lasting and very damaging effects on children. Children who do not receive adequate food or physical care will often develop and mature more slowly, while those who are left alone unsupervised or not stimulated will often find it difficult to make friends or socialise adequately. It is important to look for both physical and emotional indicators. Neglect includes situations in which adults:-

- Fail to meet a child's basic needs (e.g. food, warm clothing).
- Constantly leave children alone and unsupervised.
- Fail or refuse to give their children love and affection.

Physical indicators of neglect include:-

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- An unkempt state (frequently dirty or smelly).
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight.
- Inappropriate dress (light clothing in cold weather).

Behavioural indicators of neglect include:-

- Being tired all the time.
- Frequently being late for school or not attending at all.
- Having few friends.
- Being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis.

Emotional Abuse is perhaps the most difficult form of abuse to measure. Often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled, or because they receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers.

Physical indicators of emotional abuse include:-

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances (e.g. in hospital or away from home).
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Development delay either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Behaviour signs include:-

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. hair twisting, rocking).
- Being unable or unwilling to play.

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- Fear of making mistakes.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Self harm or mutilation.
- Fear of parents being contacted.

Sexual Abuse

Both boys and girls are abused by people who may use children to meet their own sexual needs. This might be sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic magazines, photographs or videos is also a form of sexual abuse.

Physical indicators of sexual abuse include:-

- Pain or itching in the genital area.
- Bruising or bleeding near the genital area.
- A sexually transmitted disease.
- Vaginal discharge or infection.
- Stomach pains.
- Discomfort when sitting or walking.
- Pregnancy.

Behaviour indicators of sexual abuse may include:-

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Apparent fear of someone.
- Running away from home.
- Having nightmares.
- Sexual knowledge that is beyond their age or developmental level.
- Sexual drawings or language.
- Bedwetting.
- Eating disorders.
- Self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts.
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about.
- Substance or drug abuse.
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money.
- Taking over a parental role at home and seemingly beyond their age level.
- Not allowed to have friends, particularly in adolescence.
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.
- Telling of the abuse.

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The roles of different staff

The Head of Education/Director:

The Head of Education/Director are the people responsible for contacting the Social Services to register concern about a child's welfare and implementing procedures relating to child protection. They must therefore:

- organize training on Child Protection within the School;
- ensure that all staff know about child protection policies;
- attend local authority training if appropriate;
- be aware of the role of other agencies;
- keep appropriate records and compile reports as necessary;
- support staff;
- ensure children on Child Protection Register are known and that protection plans are followed and feedback given;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of the School's Child Protection Policy.

If the Head of Education/Director is absent for any reason it must be made clear to all staff which Deputy is in charge and therefore acting as the Designated Member of Staff.

Teachers, Teachers/Instructors and Classroom Assistants:

Staff may become concerned when a child tells the teacher about events that have happened to them or to a friend, brother, sister or when another adult claims to be aware of abuse. Teachers value their relationships with parents/guardians and in many situations will share their initial concerns about a child with the parents/guardians. However, in many cases the parents/guardians may be the abusers and so teachers should be prepared to share their concerns with other professionals at an early stage without necessarily informing parents of the action they propose to take. Teachers have a professional duty to:

- observe and be alert to signs of abuse;
- take immediate action in the child's best interest by reporting any suspicion or evidence of abuse or non-accidental injury;
- know the role of the Designated Person;
- enquire about the progress of individual cases in which they are/have been involved.

All teaching staff must understand the importance of reporting suspicious circumstances and be able to report signs of abuse to the Head of Education/Director. Beyond the initial reporting of suspected child abuse, staff have a clearly restricted role as further judgments and action decisions are the responsibility of other agencies with statutory powers to help the child.

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School Staff (Non-Teaching):

As with teaching staff, non-teaching staff have a responsibility to observe and report any suspicion or evidence of abuse or non-accidental injury. All non-teaching staff must understand the importance of reporting suspicious circumstances and be able to report signs of abuse to the Head of Education/Director. Beyond the initial reporting of suspected child abuse, non-teaching staff have a clearly restricted role as further judgments and action decisions are the responsibility of other agencies with statutory powers to help the child.

Recording

All staff are required to record accurately information that may be required in respect of child protection. If a child discloses, record the precise information as soon as possible, with date, event, action taken, and sign and date the record. It is very important for staff to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. All staff records must be passed to the Head of Education/Director for storage and action. Records should not be kept in the child's normal record file but in a separate secure place.

Reporting

A member of staff only requires reasonable cause for concern regarding potential child abuse in order to act. Arriving at the point where information and its interpretation give reasonable cause for concern depends upon the source of information. If the information comes from the child then the teacher should act immediately by taking them to find the Head of Education/Director. N.B. One sentence from the child indicating child abuse or non-accidental injury provides you with 'reasonable grounds' and is sufficient for you to act. This may also apply if clear information comes from a sibling or other adult, etc. However, considering that many of the signs of child abuse are also commonly associated with other medical, social or psychological problems or simply normal child development a teacher may naturally discuss some initial concerns about a child's mental or physical well-being with other staff, parents, etc. However, in many cases the parents/guardians may be the abusers and explanations or comments made by the parents may be sufficient to give the teacher reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or non-accidental injury. Once there are reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or non-accidental injury, teachers must not contact the parents any further.

When there are reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or non-accidental injury then the following procedure must be implemented immediately:

Make a written report to the Head of Education/Director immediately. When a child has reported what amounts to suspected child abuse or non-accidental injury, then they should be taken to the Head of Education/Director even before the written report is made.

Staff must:

- Remember that the priority is to protect the child.
- Treat the matter seriously.

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- Receive the child's story if appropriate, listen but do not judge.
- React to what the child tells you with belief and tell the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Indicate to the child what action you will take and make it clear that you will have to inform others (no secrets). Only inform those with a need to know.
- Keep an accurate record of what you have become aware of and what you have done.
- Limit any questioning bearing in mind the 'must not' points below.

Staff must not:

- Contact the parents again. This is the job of social services.
- Interrogate the child if that child has disclosed information or ask leading questions.
- Speak to anyone about whom allegations are made (including colleagues).
- Promise to keep secrets/confidentiality.
- Ask a child outright if they or others have suffered abuse.
- The teacher may now withdraw from the immediate process but should remain vigilant.

The Head of Education/Director must now seek advice from the Local authority. If the time is within normal office working hours the Head of Education/Director must contact the Social Work Department. If the time is outside normal office working hours then the Head of Education/Director must contact the Emergency Duty Team of the Social Work Department.

If it is necessary for the child to be taken to hospital, then hand the child over to the direct care of medical staff informing them that non-accidental injury is suspected. A member of staff must stay with the child (whether the child has been taken to hospital or not) until the social worker arrives.

If a parent arrives to collect the child before the social worker has arrived then the member of staff has must remember that he/she has no right to prevent contact between the parents/guardians and the child or to prevent the removal of the child by the parents/guardians. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, the Police should be immediately contacted and fully informed.

The social worker(s) will decide on what action to take and it is the Social Services who must contact the parents/guardians. The Head/Director should inform the member of staff who first reported the concern as to what action has been taken.

Once a strategy for procuring support has been agreed all parties should be kept well informed of developments as appropriate.

If suspicions concern the conduct of the Head of Education/Director then the member of staff must report directly to the office of the Director Of Education in the local authority responsible for the child. Normally any communications to an authority would also be copied to the principal educational psychologist for that authority.

Once you have passed the child into the system withdraw from the process. It is not appropriate to talk to the child or to offer further support. However, when a child has

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trusted you enough to disclose, they may feel the desire to return to talk (remember that investigations can sometimes take months). In such a situation tell them that you cannot comment or advise as to do so may affect their security and safety both in the short and long term - however you can listen! Any 'discussion' could be misused in court by defence lawyers as evidence against the teacher and the child.

Guidelines in responding

Providers of any child care are entitled to expect a parent to tell them if there is anything wrong with a child. If this is made clear at the outset, it can become an accepted part of routine and therefore it will be less difficult to comment on an injury that may look suspicious.

- If an injury is evident when taking over the care of a child ask for an explanation.
- If an injury becomes apparent later ask the child or their siblings what happened.
- If the child is unable to communicate by reason of age or disability, an attempt to contact the parents should be made.
- Having been given an explanation by the child or parents, a decision about whether the explanation is satisfactory will have to be made.

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. They want the abuse to stop. By listening to and taking seriously what a child is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them. It is useful to think in advance about how you might respond to this situation.

Here are some guidelines about listening and asking questions:-

Create a safe environment by:-

- Staying calm and not rushing into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you.
- Reassuring the child and stressing they are not to blame.
- Listening to and believing what the child says. Show you are taking what is being said seriously.
- Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.

NB - any disclosure which indicates past or present abuse must be taken seriously.

Ensure you are quite clear about what the child says so you can pass it on to child protection professionals if necessary. Keep questions to a minimum and avoid closed questions (those that can be answered by a single word such as yes or no) Use open questions to encourage the child to use his or her own words. The law is very strict and a child abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child has been led or words or ideas have been suggested.

Record exactly what the child has said to you in a legible and accurate format, as soon as possible after the incident. Separate the facts from your opinion. Include:-

- The child's name, address, date of birth.
- Your observations (e.g. a description of the child's behaviour and emotional state).
- Exactly what the child said and what you said.

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- Any action you took as a result of your concerns.
- Sign and date what you have recorded and provide a copy for the service co-ordinator.
- Maintain confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality can be very damaging to the child, family and any child protection investigations which take place.

Sometimes those involved in childcare will have a strong suspicion that a child has been abused but on other occasions may be unsure. In either case there is a clear duty on carers to share their concerns with the Social Work Department.

Strong suspicion - the Social Work Department should be contacted and a referral made.

Unsure - Social Work staff who deal with childminding services or specialist child protection staff, depending on the level of concern, can be contacted for a discussion about concerns which are not clear cut. This discussion will help clarify matters and determine what if any further action might be necessary.

All concerns must be reported to the manager as soon as possible who will make contact with the Social Work Department.

Allegations against staff

Staff must protect themselves and staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. It is important not to touch children however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent. When children make such an allegation against a member of staff, procedures must be followed. This is important for the protection of the member of staff as well as the child. In the case of suspected or identified abuse of a child by a Head of Education, the police and/or Social Work have a duty to investigate.

Evaluation of Child Protection Procedures

Effective monitoring/evaluation of Child Protection issues is dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up to date records. This policy will be amended as necessary taken into account the views of children, parents, staff and other agencies, as well as local and national legislation.

A timetable of staff training will be produced at the beginning of each academic year to address this and similar issues which are appropriate to the needs of the young people we work with.

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Protection of Children and Young People Policy

All Staff must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect;
- Ensure that your own conduct in the establishment is an example of good practice;
- Ensure that you are not alone with a child or young person unless under instruction during activities and that you are at least within sight or hearing of others;
- Respect a young person's right to privacy;
- Do not discourage children or young people who want to talk about attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned;
- Recognise that special caution is required if you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people;
- Always operate within the Spark of genius Code of Practice and the procedures of the establishment.

Staff must not:

- Have inappropriate physical contact with children or young people, including 'caring' physical contact;
- Encourage inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour;
- Speak to a child or young person in an inappropriate way or make suggestive/derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people;
- Draw conclusions about others without checking the facts;
- Exaggerate or trivialize child abuse issues;
- Think it could never happen to you;
- Take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest another more prudent approach;
- Ignore the Child Protection guidelines and procedures operating within the establishment.

What to do if:

- A child or young person talks to you about abuse by someone else:
- advise the child or young person that you must pass the information on;
- allow him or her to speak without interruption, listen to what is said, but do not investigate;
- be sensitive to feelings of guilt and isolation, but do not make any judgement;
- let them know that they were right to share this information with you.
- You suspect a child or young person is being abused, emotionally, physically or sexually:
- Report the matter to the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will notify the Child Protection Officer. Where the CPC is the subject of the allegations then the CPO will be informed.
- You receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

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- Immediately tell the CPC who will inform the CPO;
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause compromise;

In all cases:

- Record the facts as soon as possible; report the facts to the CPO and CPC
- You must refer; You must not investigate

All concerns will be passed on to-

Glasgow City Council

Social Work Services

Nye Bethan House

20 India St

Glasgow

Tel: 0141 287 8700

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