



Montessori Children's House, St Andrews **Child Protection Policy**

One of our main aims at the Montessori Children's House is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all the children in our care. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that "the welfare of the child should remain the paramount consideration throughout", and therefore all actions taken are in the interests of the child. This policy along with other related policies and procedures ensure a safe and secure environment for all.

If a child is identified as being at risk of "significant harm" this should be reported immediately to the Social Work Contact Centre. The abuse of children can take many forms such as physical injury or neglect, sexual assault and emotional abuse. Abuse can be carried out on children by a wide variety of people, including for example, parents, relatives, other trusted adults, other young people and strangers.

Signs which cause concerns and could be an indication of a child being abused, neglected or exploited are:

- Unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appearing afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Afraid to go home
- Appearing hungry, tired or unkempt
- Being left unattended or unsupervised
- Having too much responsibility for their age
- Acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- Displaying concerning use of the internet and mobile phone
- Frequent absence from school
- Frequent lateness

Any concerns must be raised with either the manager or lead practitioner of the setting and if necessary social services and the police should be informed.

It is our responsibility to report such matters to the authorities and seek guidance as to what procedures to follow. Parents do not need to give consent if it is a matter of Child Protection.

In the case of a child being absent from pre-school without notification, our policy is to contact the parents/carer to ascertain the reason for their absence.

Child Protection Guidelines

1. If you are concerned that any child is suffering physical, sexual or emotional abuse either through your own observations, because the child confides in you, or because someone else expresses concerns, then..
Observe, record and report to Child Protection Officer (Judith)

2. Dealing with disclosure (listening to a child's confidences)
 - Allow the child to lead the conversation
 - Remember that it is not your role to establish proof or gather evidence
 - Make time to listen to the child
 - Try to avoid the need for the child to repeat details which are possibly embarrassing
 - Only ask open-ended questions: who, what, where, when
 - Be honest about confidentiality: the child must know that you will have to pass the information on to get the help they need
 - Where possible , indicate what might happen in the short term
 - Take the child seriously, acknowledge that they were right to tell, and are not responsible for what happened
 - Reassure the child that you will continue to support them in the future
 - Make notes as soon as possible after the disclosure
 - Complete a care and welfare form
 - Keep the child informed of what is likely to happen

3. THEN REPORT THE MATTER IMMEDIATELY TO THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (Judith Gibbins) or DEPUTY CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (Natalia Ventsel)

4. If the child is in immediate danger call POLICE SCOTLAND on 999

5. If we have a Child Protection concern we will contact the Social Work Contact Centre on
03451 55 15 03 and then press the star key.
Out of hours emergency telephone number is 03451 55 00 99

6. Complete a Fife Child Concern Form and submit it immediately to the Social Work Contact Centre at the email address SW.Contractctr@fife.gov.uk

Allegations against staff:

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, that person will be suspended from duty until the incident has been investigated to ensure protection of the child. The Care Inspectorate will be informed and the appropriate action taken.

Where the concern is deemed not to be a Child Protection issue we will follow Fife's Child Wellbeing pathway to support the child to reach the desired outcomes, knowing that at any point on the pathway the situation may become a Child Protection issue.