

<p style="text-align: center;">Trinity After School Club Child Protection Policy</p>
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Our club will work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

To this end we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children.

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. Child protection is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other club policies and procedures.

Trinity After School Club has a clear commitment to safeguarding children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the manager for child protection at the earliest opportunity.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- **The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007**
- **Protection of Children (Scotland) Act (2003)**
- **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 incorporating 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC)**

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem and they may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The club has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or bullying. Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care.

As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/guardians and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child. The Club will refer to "**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland**" (**The Scottish Government, 2021**) when dealing with any case of suspected abuse to a child. **Edinburgh & Lothian's Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures** will be adhered to.

The club aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of after school club staff
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying, discriminatory behaviour, internet abuse and cyber bullying
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures including the local Child Protection guidelines
- Ensure parents/guardians are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the after school club and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate.

Children will be supported by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. Activities will be devised according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence within their peer group.

Contact telephone numbers

- **Care Inspectorate:** 0345 600 9527
- **Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC):** 0345 6030 891
- **Child Protection Police:** 0131 311 3131 Lothian and Borders Police website: www.lbp.police.uk
- **Social Care Direct:** 0131 200 2324

Monday to Thursday 8.30 a.m - 5 p.m, Friday 8.30 a.m to 3.55 p.m (Out of office hours: 0800 731 6969)

City of Edinburgh Council
Children and Families
Social Care Department
Level 1, Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh
EH8 8BG

Telephone the Disability Team, Waverley Court: 0131 469 3016 if the child is disabled.

- **Website Child Protection**

<http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/Services/AZ/ProtectingChildren/Pages/ContactNumbers.aspx>

- **Parent Line: 08000 28 22 33**
- **Childline: 08001111**

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.

Physical abuse

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical 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 manager or co-ordinator.

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

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child, when they come into the club or that occur during time at the club, will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent/guardian at the earliest opportunity
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/guardian will have access to such records
- If there are any queries regarding the injury, it will be immediately reported to the manager who will immediately refer the matter to Child Protection Team in the local authority.

Fabricated illness

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with 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 to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or had 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 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.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing; the procedure stated later in this document under 'recording abuse suspicions' will be followed.

Procedure:

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be immediately reported to the manager or person who will immediately refer the matter to Child Protection Team in the local authority.

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 upon them. 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, 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.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the manager
- The concern will be discussed with the parent

- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to the manager who will immediately refer the matter to Child Protection Team in the local authority.

Neglect

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe 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 the club unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them) 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 after school club. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Procedure:

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to the manager who will immediately refer the matter to Child Protection Team in the local authority.

Indicators of child abuse

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff should make an objective record (supported by the manager) of any observation or disclosure and include:

- 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
- Exact position and type of injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of an incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom the 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, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

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 ruined by staff putting words in the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate.

Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have concerns with regard to a child. The after school club expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make comment either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

Staffing and volunteering

It is the policy of the after school club to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The club will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their Disclosure Scotland check clearance.

We ask all new staff to register with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, which has replaced the Disclosure Scotland checks.

All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment, and receive initial basic training during their first week. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in the after school club.

We have a named person within the club that co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The designated person undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The named person regarding child protection at the club is: **Moira MacDonald**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children
- Applicants for posts within the club 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 applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- All Disclosure Scotland checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children. We ask all staff requiring updated checks to join the PVG scheme
- We abide by the Care Inspectorate requirements in respect of references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the after school club or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- All students will be requested to join the PVG scheme
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised

- We abide by the 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 lead to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the club and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the club, so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All contractors/external workers will be Disclosure Scotland checked/PVG scheme registered and the manager will request this before allowing them access to the club. All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to a whistleblowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within the after school club allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be placed into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Child Protection Team does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Child Protection Team.

Support to families

- The after school club takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the club.

- The after school club continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Child Protection Team with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Employees and volunteers of the After School Club

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the Care Inspectorate and the Child Protection Team will be informed and this will be investigated. This may result in the after school club disciplinary procedure being followed. Dependant on the nature of the allegation the member of staff may be suspended whilst investigations take place.

The incident will be dealt with by the manager with support from the Child Protection Team:

- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals to determine how this will be handled
- The after school club reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with professional support and advice
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. The Care Inspectorate will be notified immediately of this decision
- Counselling will be available for any member of the after school club who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the after school club and the parents.

Reviewed and updated on:
29/03/22

