**Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy**

**Purpose of Policy**

The protection of children and young people from abuse, harm and exploitation is of utmost importance to the nursery and its staff. The nursery wishes to ensure, that all measures are taken to ensure that all children and young people attending the nursery are safe, secure and protected from harm.

The nursery recognises that there may be occasions when staff have concerns about a child’s welfare and suspect child abuse, when allegations of child abuse have been made to staff, or a child has disclosed information to a member of staff that gives cause for concern. In these instances, the nursery recognises that staff need guidance on how they should proceed and the measures to be taken in those circumstances.

**The Guidance in Context**

Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it, and their safety is always paramount. Child protection must be seen in the context of the wider Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach, the Early Years Framework, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. GIRFEC promotes action to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in eight areas. These wellbeing indicators state that children and young people must be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. GIRFEC is the national approach to improving outcomes through public services that support the wellbeing of children and young people. The GIRFEC approach ensures that services are brought together more effectively to provide help and support for children, young people, and their parents when they need it.

The nursery has adopted the Renfrewshire Council Child Protection Guidelines (Revised Standard Circular 57). All procedures and guidance contained in this policy are in line with those guidelines. A copy of Revised Standard Circular 57 will be available in the office.

Rainbow Nursery works in accordance to the follow policies and legislation:

* *Health and Social Care Standards*
* *Getting it Right for Every Child*
* *Early Years Framework*
* *The Children’s Charter*
* *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
* *The Children (Scotland) Act 1995*
* *The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003*
* *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*

**The Role of the Staff**

Most injuries to children are accidental and can be simply explained. Bruises, scrapes and cuts are part of the normal rough and tumble of a young child’s life. There are, however, some children who suffer injuries that are not accidental and give rise to concerns. Our staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating.

The nursery has a trained Child Protection Officer (normally the nursery manager) who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children’s social care. At least one other member of staff within the nursery will be trained to lead on child protection issues, to provide a safeguard in the event that the Child Protection Officer is not available.

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life. Any staff member who has a concern about a children’s welfare should follow the referral processes as detailed in this policy. Staff should expect to support Social Workers and other agencies following any referral. It is vital that staff understand that their responsibility to safeguard children requires the appropriate sharing of any concerns that they may have about children. Staff should provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected and feel confident about approaching adults if they are in difficulties. Staff should support the child’s development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience and provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, ensuring they contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children where appropriate. Staff should ensure that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.

All staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so they are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. Staff in the nursery are advised to be vigilant and maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to the Child Protection Officer.

If staff have any concerns about a child’s welfare they should act on them immediately and report to the Child Protection Officer. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. If a staff member has reported a concern about a child which the senior nursery team decide not to refer at this stage, it is the responsibility of any member of staff unhappy with this decision to make their own referral.

**What is Child Abuse?**

Child Abuse is the term used to describe ways in which children are intentionally or inadvertently harmed or placed at risk of harm, usually by adults, and often by people that they trust.

**Categories of Abuse**

Physical Abuse - A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse - The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse - Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect – The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Bullying - Bullying is defined as any form of abuse on a child which is inflicted upon them by their peers, this abuse can be subtle, including, teasing, being ignored, or left out, being pushed, or pulled about, or having money or possessions taken.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls. It is the practice of cutting or removing the external female genitalia without medical justification or consent. The practice is found in some countries of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and within communities from countries in which FGM is common.

Grooming: Child grooming is befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, and sometimes the family, to lower the child's inhibitions with the objective of sexual abuse. Child grooming is also regularly used to lure minors into various illicit businesses such as child trafficking, child prostitution, cybersex trafficking, or the production of child pornography.

Child Sex Tourism (Trafficking) - This is defined as the purpose of engaging in the prostitution of children, which is commercially facilitated child sexual abuse Child sex tourism, is a form of child prostitution within the wider issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The children who perform as prostitutes in the child sex tourism trade often have been lured or abducted into sexual slavery.

Domestic - Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships as well as in the context of their home life.

**Recognition of Abuse**

It is essential that you are knowledgeable about definitions, categories and indicators of child abuse and you will receive relevant training in this respect to ensure your knowledge is up-to-date. Should you feel you require additional training, please contact your line manager to arrange this as soon as possible.

The following list although not exhaustive may be indicative of some of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, it should be noted that some children may display some of these signs in times of stress; it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused.

**Indicators of Abuse**

* Injuries to the child that are not consistent with the normal play activities of a child, either in position or type.
* Inconsistent or unreasonable explanation of an injury by a child, parent, or carer
* Inconsistent or inappropriate behaviour such as sexually explicit remarks or actions, mood swings, uncharacteristically quiet/aggressive, severe tantrums.
* Becoming isolated socially
* Overeating, loss of appetite, weight loss, weight gain.
* Inappropriately dressed or ill-kept and/or dirty
* Self-inflicting injury
* Open distrust of, or discomfort with, parent or carer
* Delayed social development, poor language, and speech
* Excessively nervous behaviour, such as rocking or hair twisting
* Low self esteem
* Recurring Abdominal Pain
* Reluctance to go home
* Flinching when approached or touched
* Recurring headaches
* Child having a mobile phone
* Infections – UTI’s or STI’s
* Scaring / bleeding / bruising
* Attending nursery with more luxurious items
* Different carers collecting

**Responding to a Child Who Confides in you**

* Stay Calm
* Do not make promises you cannot keep
* Offer reassurance and support
* Do not take control of the situation yourself, immediately tell your line manager
* Record the facts and discussion in the child's own words
* Maintain confidentiality

**Reporting & Recording Suspicions of Abuse**

You will receive appropriate training on child protection issues and behavioural indicators highlighting an issue. If you make such disclosures or refer such concerns in good faith, you will be fully supported by management and not subjected to any detriment. All staff should be aware that any incidents must be recorded. It is also very important for staff to communicate about matters of this kind. You must alert the Child Protection Officer if any of the following has taken place and could be considered grounds for concern:

* a specific incident has occurred
* a disclosure made by a child, parent or carer
* information received from a third party
* adult behaviour or circumstance that may place the child at risk or harm
* child behaviour or circumstances that may place the child at risk or harm
* a culmination of minor concerns over a period of time

If you raise a concern you should complete a Record of Concern Alert for Staff (appendix 3) contained in the Standard Circular 57, after alerting the Child Protection Officer. Information should be recorded accurately and concisely.

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to assess the immediate risk to the child in referring a child to the social work department and follow the procedures detailed below. In all cases the Child Protection Officer must contact the social worker department directly with grounds for concern, as well as sending a completed referral form. If a referral is made out with normal office hours, the form should be completed to the social work department within three working days. The referral form contained in Standard Circular 57, Notification of Concerns about a Child to Social Work Services, must be used for every referral. Copies of the referral forms will be held in the child’s confidential case file keeping an account of all telephone calls, interviews and discussions, building a chronology and noting developments and outcomes.

**Injuries from Home**

If a child arrive with an injury, staff should ask the parent/carer how the injuries occurred. Explanations, however puzzling, should be accepted and accusations must not be made. Staff should make a written record by completing an Injury from Home form, which should be signed by the parent. This recording of information is to ensure that reasonably full and clear information is obtained in order to be able to make an appropriate referral if necessary.

**Safer Recruitment**

To meet the nursery’s aims of a safe and healthy environment for children, it strives to apply the highest standards of recruitment and vetting procedures. All staff employed by the setting undergo a series of checks before commencing employment with the company including Enhanced Disclosure Checks under and other reference checks.

Other measures which the nursery has in place in order to ensure a safe and secure environment for children are detailed in a variety of the nursery’s other policies and procedures, particularly the Health & Safety Policy and Confidentiality Policy. The nursery also ensures all staff are trained and supervised as appropriate and that we keep up-to-date with UK developments relating to the care and protection of young people and modify our procedures accordingly.

**Disqualified from Working with Children List**

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 makes it an offence for the Company to employ someone, either in a paid position or as a volunteer, who is included on the DWCL list. The Company takes its duties under the Act seriously and has in place procedures to ensure, so far as reasonably possible, that it vets all its staff before employing them. Any instances of sexual or other abuse of children will be reported immediately to the police, social services and other appropriate child protection agencies and are grounds for summary termination of employment in line with the Company’s disciplinary procedures.

**All Staff Should**

* Play your part in helping to develop an ethos where all people matter and are treated with equality, and respect and dignity.
* Always put the care, welfare, and safety needs of a child first.
* Respect a child's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them.
* Listen attentively to any ideas and views a child wants to share with you.
* Respect a child's culture (for example, their faith and beliefs)
* Respect a child's right to privacy and personal space.
* Respond sensitively to children who seem anxious about participating in certain activities
* Speak to a member of staff immediately if you suspect that a child is experiencing bullying or harassment.
* Be aware of the vulnerability of some groups of children to being isolated and hurt.
* Ensure that when you are working with children you are at least within sight or hearing of other adults.
* Listen carefully when a child 'tells you' (sometimes through drawings and behaviour as well as words) that they are being harmed and report what you have discovered immediately to the Child Protection Officer.
* Report immediately any suspicion that a child may be at risk of harm or abuse.
* Never dismiss what a child tells you as lies or exaggeration.
* Only restrain a child who is at imminent harm of inflicting harm to themselves or others.
* Never underestimate the contribution that you can make to the development of safe communities for children.

**Staff Should Never**

* Exaggerate or trivialise another worker concerns about a child or ignore an allegation or suspicion of abuse in the hope that it will either go away or that someone else will deal with it.
* Discuss personal issues about a child or their family with other people except where it concerns the wellbeing of the child.
* Be drawn into derogatory remarks or gestures in front of the children or young people.
* Allow a child or young person to be bullied or harmed by anyone else in the organisation.
* Allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
* Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay
* Never engage in or allow others to engage in touching a child in a sexually provocative manner.
* Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
* Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or sports activity or conforms to the guidance on appropriate physical restraint
* Never form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children.
* Harass or intimidate a child or worker because of their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, socio-economic status, or disability.
* Unnecessarily invite or allow children to stay with you at your home. If members of staff invite or allow children to enter their own homes (for example, when playing with the staff members own children or upon request of the child's parent or carer), this must be done with the express permission of the child's parent or carer. In addition, the member of staff should inform the manager of the setting of the arrangement and follow the child protection policy and the code of conduct. Rainbow Nursery accepts no responsibility for the actions of its employees when they are not within their working hours. Parents and carers should be aware that where they request a member of staff to look after their children out with setting hours this is done by personal arrangement and has no bearing on the nursery.

**Mobile Phones & Cameras**

Mobile phones are strictly prohibited from the children’s rooms and garden. Staff and visitors are required to keep their phones in their bags or lockers in the staff room. Parents are only permitted to use mobiles in the entrance hall. Photographs can only be taken by nursery cameras and be used for displays or the children’s profiles.

**Confidentiality**

All children and young people are entitled to have matters treated in confidence and the nursery endeavours to deal with and process all confidential information received in accordance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. However, where the Company reasonably considers any children/young people about whom the information is given are at risk of abuse or harm, there can be no guarantee of confidentiality.

**Responsibility for Managing this Policy**

The responsibility of managing this policy lies with the Nursery Manager who will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation. This will be done through standard monitoring procedures in individual services, monitoring of training opportunities for staff groups and individuals and monitoring of service delivery by the senior management team.

The policy will be amended as and when required by legislative changes, changes to the policy of Renfrewshire Council, changes required as highlighted through the monitoring procedures set out above, or on the instruction of the Board of Directors of the Company.

*This policy will be monitored in line with relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.*

**Date Updated: March 2023**

**Review Date: March 2024**