



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement

In accordance with the principles and values of GIRFEC BOSCA will promote the emotional and physical safety of all children using or visiting the service to ensure that they feel safe and secure and that they are free from exploitation, abuse or harm.

BOSCA staff are all aware of their responsibility to protect children from harm, harassment, bullying and neglect. It is their responsibility to protect children from physical, mental and sexual abuse.

BOSCA staff are trained to be familiar with the signs and symptoms of child abuse, bullying and neglect.

BOSCA staff know the procedures for reporting any suspicions or concerns and how to deal with a disclosure (parents may not always be informed). Staff have a professional and contractual obligation to do this.

BOSCA staff are aware of their responsibility to ensure that children in their care are able to exercise their rights as laid down in the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

BOSCA staff are always appropriate in their physical contact with a child.

BOSCA staff exercise their responsibility to teach children how to develop skills and practices that will help protect them from abuse and bullying as well as encouraging a healthy lifestyle.

All child protection matters are dealt with, with reference to 'Glasgow Child Protection Committee' guidelines and in accordance with BOSCA's Confidentiality Policy and Record Keeping Policy.

Regular risk assessments are carried out on premises, equipment, activities and outings so to ensure compliance with the aforementioned policies and guidelines.

Parents are made aware of our child protection procedures and have access to BOSCA's child protection policy.



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BOSCA will promote the safety of all children by ensuring:-

- All staff have an enhanced criminal records check, carried out by Disclosure Scotland and two personal/ character references.
- Guidelines are given on appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with the children.
- Staff are trained to be aware and recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse in the hope that any child in need will be identified and receive appropriate help.
- Staff are encouraged to voice any concerns and are made familiar with methods of recording incidents and suspicions, all of which this must be done on the same day. All suspicions/concerns are reported to the person in charge.
- In the case of disclosure the staff member will strive to get permission from the child but will inform them that they will have to tell the person in charge. The person in charge will always report disclosure to the Social Services
- Staff uphold their responsibility to observe, report and record any concerns and co-operate fully with social services and any other relevant agencies.
- BOSCA staff work using the principles of GIRFEC

See also:-

Anti-Bullying policy
Health and Safety policy
Confidentiality policy
Record Keeping policy



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Guidelines are given in this policy for staff on how to deal with disclosure and how to support the child by listening, believing, reassuring and affirming the child's feelings. It is not the role of staff to be disbelieving, interrogating or judgemental.

The manager or person in charge must respond immediately to matters which may cause concern. This initially may be in the form of voicing concerns to the head teacher to find out if the school has similar concerns or by contacting the social work department. It is always the responsibility of the service to ensure the safety of the child.

Any concerns are recorded in the incident book complying with confidentiality and record keeping policies and must always be countersigned by the person in charge.

All situations must be monitored and accurate records kept and signed by all witnesses.

Staff must remember that not all children show classic signs of abuse and any significant change in a child's normal behaviour merits attention. This may turn out to be nothing at all but should be noted in case a pattern emerges.

Writing inconsequential accounts in the incident book does not do anyone any harm, ignoring a cry for help does.

Children who are troubled but find it difficult trying to talk to staff should be made aware of an appropriate helpline.

ANTI BULLYING NETWORK 0131 651 6100
CHILDLINE SCOTLAND (adults) 0141 552 1123
CHILDLINE SCOTLAND HELPLINE (children) 0800 11 11



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Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to have a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, bullying and neglect and to know the procedures for reporting any suspicions or concerns and how to deal with disclosure. (See Glasgow Child Protection Guidelines.)

Staff have a professional and contractual obligation to do this. Every worker has a responsibility to ensure that children in their care are able to exercise their right to be safe and raised in a warm and stimulating environment.

The staff should always be appropriate in their physical contact with a child. They have a responsibility to teach children how to develop skills and practices that will help protect them from abuse.

Manager

While maintaining a partnership with parents the manager must maintain a focus on the child.

She must treat all concerns reported as a priority and take appropriate action.

She must consider the immediate needs of all children concerned and take emergency action if needed.

She has a responsibility to support the child and ensure correct procedures are followed in dealing with the child and recording and storing information.

The manager should co-operate fully with social services and other relevant agencies.

See Glasgow Child Protection Guidelines.

Social Work Department (child and family) 0141 276 3110

Social Work Department (out of hours) 0800 811 505

Partick Police Station 0141 532 3500

Police Scotland 101



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Child Abuse

Child Abuse is the likelihood of, or demonstrable damage or harm done to a child that will cause physical injury, mental or emotional damage or serious disruption of their development.

The injury or harm must have been preventable by action from the parent or carer.

Child Abuse is also the failure to do something for a child that is necessary to ensure their well-being, health, safety and positive development.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is the actual or likely physical injury of a child through direct attack, administration of toxic substances or failure to protect them from preventable harm. This injury may include scratches, bites, burns, fractures, deliberate poisoning, drowning, smothering or shaking.

The 'Don't shake the baby' campaign was launched in the 1990s to highlight this danger.

Injuries to a child prior to birth as a result of the mother's lifestyle, excessive physical punishment or Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy are all physical abuse.

Physical Abuse is the most common cause of death from abuse in children.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is persistent, deliberate uncaring or emotionally cruel treatment of a child. This includes rejection, denigration, isolation or tormenting of a child. It may be as a result of domestic violence when a child is torn between disputing parents, when the child is continually criticised or if faced with unrealistic or unachievable goals. Children may be overprotected so much that they have low self-esteem and no self-confidence.



Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or anyone who is developmentally immature. The abuse may take the form of sexual intercourse or may be fondling, masturbation, oral or anal sex. Attempts to involve children in any sexual acts or exhibitionism are abuse as is involving children in looking at or taking part in the creation of pornographic material.

Neglect

Neglect is failure of parents or carers to provide basic physical needs for a child. This may be inadequate food and clothing so the child is hungry and cold. The child may be dirty and have sores and infections from unchanged nappies, cuts, scratches etc. that would be healed with basic medical attention.

Children who are left at home alone are also neglected. Severely neglected children may die.

Failure to Thrive

Failure to Thrive is when a child fails to reach normal growth and developmental milestones. There are no medical or genetic reasons for the low weight, small stature and poor motor, intellectual and social development. This abuse originates from the relationship between child and carer and may affect only one child in the family.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a harmful traditional practice that is a crime in Scotland under the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005

FGM means any procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

FGM is also known as cutting, female circumcision or sunna but is not approved by any religion and has no health benefits.



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Indicators of Abuse

- Recurring headaches
- Reluctance to go home
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Recurring abdominal pain
- Injuries to the child that is not consistent with the normal recreational habits of children
- Inconsistent or inappropriate explanation of an injury by a child, parent or carer
- Inconsistent or inappropriate behaviour such as sexually suggestive remarks or actions, mood swings, uncharacteristically quiet / aggressive, severe tantrums
- Becoming socially isolated
- Overeating / loss of appetite Weight loss / gain
- Delayed social development, poor language and speech
- Open distrust of, or discomfort with parent or carer
- Self inflicting injury
- Excessive nervous behaviour such as rocking or hair twisting
- Exceptionally low self esteem
- Regression or returning to younger or more babyish behaviour



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Additional Symptoms

Children who have been sexually abused frequently have more specific symptoms:

- Copying adult sexual behaviour.
- Persistent sexual play with other children, themselves, toys and pets.
- Unexplained pain, swelling, bleeding or irritation of the mouth, genital or anal area; urinary infections; sexually transmitted diseases.
- Hints, indirect comments or statements about the abuse.

The Silent Problem

Often children do not tell about sexual abuse because they:

- Are too young to put into words what has happened
- Have been threatened or bribed by the abuser to keep the abuse a secret
- Feel confused by the attention and feelings accompanying the abuse
- Are afraid that no one will believe them
- Blame themselves or believe the abuse is punishment for being 'bad'
- Feel too ashamed or embarrassed to tell
- Worry about getting into trouble or getting a loved one into trouble



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Disclosure - Listening to a child

The first steps when talking to a child are critical. Often the child will be frightened, confused and feeling vulnerable.

The child should be reassured in a calm manner that he/she is safe and has done the right thing by telling you.

Listen carefully to the child without leading their conversation or showing any kind of shock reaction.

A child often assumes an irrational guilt complex, feeling that the abuse is somehow their fault.

Again reassurance that he/she is not to blame should be given.

Emphasise that the claims are being taken seriously and that it will be necessary to involve someone else to ensure the abuse stops.

When a child discloses information, which suggests abuse, the following action should be taken:

1. As soon as the play worker becomes concerned about what the child is saying, they should explain to the child that, in order to stop the abuse, the manager has to be involved. The play worker should report to the manager all the information gleaned so far.
2. The manager should sit in with the playworker and the child and allow the child to recount the story freely without any undue interruptions or questioning, but a clear understanding of the account should be ensured.
3. The manager will contact the relevant local authorities. Immediately afterwards a written report should be compiled by the manager and playworker and should include:
 - The nature of the allegation
 - Details of any bruising or any other injury
 - Times, dates and any other relevant information
 - Dates, times and names of those adults involved in the conversation with the child



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Disclosure

In circumstances where the named abuser is a play worker the manager should be contacted immediately.

Above all, the respect for the child's privacy must be paramount and the staff involved must not discuss the details with anyone other than those necessary to carry out the procedures outlined previously.

Staff must not discuss instances of disclosure with any one else outside OF BOSCA.

BOSCA also recognises that disclosure can be very distressing for staff involved. Anyone who is affected by this and finding it hard to deal with should contact the manager, whereby appropriate support will be arranged.

Additional Guidelines

DO's

- Be accessible/receptive
- Take it seriously (there is a reason for the child imparting such information)
- Reassure the child they are right to tell
- Negotiate getting help (i.e. through the manager)
- Find help quickly
- Make careful records of what was said

DON'T

- Jump to conclusions
- Try to get the child to disclose
- Speculate or accuse anyone



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Supervision (see separate policy)

Children are supervised at all times and play workers are always very aware of what is happening around them.

Play workers should take care not to turn their backs on the children or to become too involved in specific activities, which would detract from good supervision.

The staff work on a 1:10 ratio at BOSCA and on a 1:4 ratio on trips and outings.

Children are taught the boundaries in and out of the school and are not permitted to leave these areas without an adult.

Children are also taught how to keep themselves safe and how to have a regard for other children.

See also:

Anti-bullying Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Supervision Policy (including missing child and lost child procedures)

Holiday and Playscheme Advice for Staff

Glasgow's Child Protection Guidelines

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010