

Play Midlothian

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

Play Midlothian is committed to the protection of children and young people and regards the safeguarding and promotion of their interests and wellbeing as of paramount concern. Play Midlothian has a duty and responsibility to ensure that every child is safe and protected and that their overall wellbeing needs are met.

The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to:

- Provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst accessing Play Midlothian services
- Allow all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers including trustees.

Designated Child Protection Officer

Play Midlothian's child protection officer is Play Midlothian's Play Services Manager.

The current contact details are: Laura Baigrie, 0131 663 2243 (office hours) or 07504 345 948 (out with office hours).

Responsibilities

It is Play Midlothian's responsibility to ensure that anyone working within the organisation, including volunteers, are aware of and adhere to Play Midlothian's procedures.

It is the duty of all those involved with, representing or employed by the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children and young people (defined as anyone under 18) with whom they come into contact or work with.

Line managers have a duty to:

- Understand, explain and promote the policy to their staff
- Encourage staff to raise any concerns they have regarding bullying and/or other forms of child abuse with Play Midlothian's child protection officer
- Be responsive and supportive to any employee or volunteer who so raises a concern

Employees and volunteers have a duty to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures
- Immediately raise any concerns they have relating to bullying or where abuse is suspected, evidenced or witnessed, with Play Midlothian's child protection officer
- Advise their line manager immediately if they are under suspicion or accused of any conduct which may affect their suitability to work with children

Play Midlothian's designated child protection officer has a duty to:

- Liaise with any employee or volunteer who wishes to raise concerns
- Be responsive and supportive to any employee or volunteer who so raises a concern
- Make a record of the concerns raised and store these in a locked cabinet or drawer
- Determine who any information shared will be passed on to, including whether the issue is reportable as a GIRFEC wellbeing concern or as a child protection concern
- Where relevant, make referrals to social work or in an emergency, to the police
- Keep a record of the decision made about what to share with whom and why

Definitions

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

The formal definition of Child Abuse is: 'Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (ie. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).' (Scottish office, 1998, 'Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility').

For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition gets broken down further into Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Injury
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Non-organic Failure to Thrive

What do you do if you have general concerns about a child?

Sometimes it can be difficult to know if a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse. You might have general concerns about a child but be unsure whether or not the child is being abused. If you are worried, you should report your concerns to Play Midlothian's designated Child Protection Officer. Check with your line manager if you are not sure who this is currently.

What do you do if a child tells or you suspect a child is being abused or at risk of abuse?

If a child tells you something, or you suspect a child is being abused or at risk of abuse, you must report your concerns to Play Midlothian's designated child protection officer immediately. If the child protection officer cannot be reached, report your concerns to your line manager. If they are also not available, phone social work or the police yourself and inform your line manager and the child protection officer at the earliest possible opportunity.

Guidelines for supporting children

Do

- Listen, support and respect the child
- Re-assure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to you;
- Report any concern immediately;

- Record the information gathered as soon as possible using Play Midlothian's recording method;
- Be mindful of changes in a child's behaviour, both physical and emotional presentation and any increased vulnerabilities.
- Where possible ensure that more than one adult is present or you are at least within sight and hearing of others
- Be aware that someone else might misinterpret actions even if they are well-intentioned
- Show interest in hearing what children have to say and make time to talk to them
- Only share concerns with those outlined in this Child Protection Policy – otherwise the matter should remain strictly confidential

Don't

- Make false promises
- Promise confidentiality
- Interview the child or ask any leading questions
- Assume that someone else will share the concern
- Take any further action unless instructed to do so

Information sharing: consent

- Never promise a child confidentiality and remind them that any child protection concerns will be shared and with who
- Always share information if concerned about a child's safety or wellbeing
- Where there are child protection concerns parental consent is not needed

Record keeping

- Record information shared as soon as possible including the date and time
- Record any information shared in the child's own words
- Differentiate between and state what is fact and what is opinion
- Record the presentation and emotional state of the child
- Record information shared on Play Midlothian's GIRFEC/child protection form
- Play Midlothian's child protection officer stores the information in a locked cabinet at Play Midlothian's office
- Record information at Play Midlothian's office so that it can immediately be stored securely

Allegations against Play Midlothian staff, trustees or volunteers

All allegations against anyone within Play Midlothian are taken very seriously and investigated.

Allegations against any Play Midlothian personnel should in the first instance be taken to the Child Protection Officer, who will raise the matter with the most senior member of staff. If the allegation is against the Child Protection Officer, it should be taken straight to Play Midlothian's most senior staff member. If the allegation is against the most senior member of staff, or they are not contactable, the Child Protection Officer should take the matter to Play Midlothian's Chairperson. Any queries should be directed to the Child Protection Officer.

Any allegations made will be shared with Police Scotland.

Under the PVG Act Play Midlothian has a duty to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland (within three months of taking a final decision about the conduct) when they are satisfied that an individual's conduct meets the following criteria (referral ground):

- Harmed a child or protected adult

- Placed a child or protected adult at risk of harm
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child or protected adult
- Given inappropriate medical treatment to a child or protected adult

This applies only where they have been dismissed/would have dismissed if the individual had not left the employment or they have transferred the individual permanently away from regulated work.

Media safety

Parental permission must be sought and obtained before filming or photographing children, and before using these photos for publicity purposes. The permission form must include a clear statement on the various ways a photo or video could be used, including reference to use on social media or Play Midlothian's website. Children's own feelings about being filmed or photographed should also be established and respected.

Selection of staff and volunteers

Play Midlothian will ensure committee members, staff, volunteers and freelance contractors are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Short listed applicants to staff or volunteer positions will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.

In accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007 Play Midlothian will, where relevant to the position, carry out a PVG check prior to an applicant taking up a position. Depending on the circumstances this could entail:

- Facilitating the applicant's joining of the PVG Scheme if they are not already a member, plus at the same time accessing a Scheme Record
- Accessing a Scheme Record Update (if a Scheme Record has previously been accessed by Play Midlothian) – potentially followed by accessing the full Scheme Record if the update shows new information is available

Play Midlothian will request a PVG check only where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought. Where a position requires a PVG check we will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.

At interview or when receiving a Scheme Record which shows a conviction, Play Midlothian will take into consideration whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered, following guidance available from Disclosure Scotland, including in the Code of Practice.

Play Midlothian will check the identity of new recruits and maintain records of those checks in case later required by Disclosure Scotland.

PVG and identity check information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties. PVG and identity check information will be stored in a locked non-portable container. Those responsible for implementing the PVG checks at Play Midlothian should familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice available from Disclosure Scotland.

Employees and volunteers must not commence work at Play Midlothian before a suitable PVG is received. Play Midlothian will re-check people with a new PVG update every three years.

Training

Face to face training on child protection and Play Midlothian's Child Protection Policy will be provided to new employees and volunteers and thereafter refreshed at least every 24 months (which may be through e-learning).

Links to other sources of information

- National Guidance for Child Protection (2014): www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052
- Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures (Edinburgh and the Lothians): http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child_Protection/Interagency_Child_Protection_Procedures_-_Edinburgh_the_Lothians_Oct_2015.pdf
- Getting it Right for Every Child Guidance: www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright
- National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland (2012): www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00391307.pdf
- Local Information Sharing Policies (Edinburgh and the Lothians): http://emppc.org.uk/file/Child_Protection/Edinburgh_and_Lothian_-_A_practitioner_guide_to_information_sharing_confidentiality_consent_Edin_Lothians_-_27-10-14.pdf
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007: www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc