



## 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 policy applies to all employees and volunteers including trustees.

### Designated Safeguarding Officer

Play Midlothian's safeguarding 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 safeguarding 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 safeguarding officer
- Report any concerns to social work or the police in the absence of Play Midlothian's safeguarding officer (and later update the safeguarding 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 safeguarding 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 whether the issue is a GIRFEC wellbeing concern or a child protection concern
- Determine who any information will be passed on to
- 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 there is a child protection issue. You should report your concerns to Play Midlothian's designated safeguarding officer, who can provide advice and support. If you are unable to reach them, try your line manager. If neither are available that day or the next day, you need to discuss your concern with social work or the police.

You can reach the children's services duty team on 0131 271 3413 (office hours) or 0800 731 6969 (out of hours) or the police on 101 (or in an emergency 999).

You are always doing the right thing to raise a concern with social work or the police – they will make the decision on the significance of the information and what should happen next (if anything). Remember, they may hold other information about the child and your concern may be an important piece of this jigsaw.

Afterwards, you need to update the safeguarding officer so that they can maintain the appropriate records and provide you with support.

Feedback on the outcome of social work investigations should be requested by the safeguarding officer.

### **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 this to social work or the police immediately.

If the safeguarding officer is immediately available, report your concerns to them as they can support the process. However, if they are not immediately available, you must go ahead and report your concern to social work or the police straight away. Do not delay on this.

You can reach the Children's Services duty team on 0131 271 3413 (office hours) or 0800 731 6969 (out of hours) or the police on 101 (or in an emergency 999).

Afterwards, you need to update the safeguarding officer so that they can maintain the appropriate records and provide you with support.

Feedback on the outcome of social work investigations should be requested by the safeguarding officer.

### **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 safeguarding 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 designated safeguarding officer, who will raise the matter with the managing director. If the allegation is against the safeguarding officer, it should be taken straight to the Managing Director. If the allegation is against the most Managing Director, or they are not contactable, the safeguarding officer should take the matter to Play Midlothian's Chairperson. Any queries should be directed to the safeguarding officer (unless the allegation pertained to them).

Any allegations made will be shared with Police Scotland. If you cannot reach anyone listed above, then you should report the allegation to Police Scotland yourself.

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.

Play Midlothian will request a PVG for regulated work, a Standard Disclosure for admin posts (because they could have access to information on service users) and a Basic Disclosure for any other employee. We will make this clear on the job advert.

Where a record 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.

Criminal record and identity check information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties. Criminal record and identity check information will be stored in a locked non-portable container. Those responsible for implementing criminal record 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 the relevant PVG or Disclosure record is received. Play Midlothian will re-check people with a PVG Update or Disclosure every three years.

### **Training**

Training on child protection and Play Midlothian's Child Protection Policy will be provided to new employees and volunteers and thereafter refreshed annually. This should be a face-to-face full course at least every three years, but can be via e-learning or in-house refreshers in the intermediate years.

### **Links to other sources of information**

- National Guidance for Child Protection (2014): [www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052)
- Public Protection in East Lothian and Midlothian (including guidance on interagency procedures and information sharing) – [www.emppc.org.uk](http://www.emppc.org.uk)
- Getting it Right for Every Child Guidance: [www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright](http://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](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00391307.pdf)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007: [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents)