**Cart Mill Family Centre**

**Child Protection Policy**

“Procedures and guidance cannot in themselves protect children; a competent, skilled and confident workforce, together with a vigilant public, can. Child protection is a complex system requiring the interaction of services, the public, children and families. For the system to work effectively, it is essential that everyone understands the contribution they can make and how those contributions work together to provide the best outcomes for children. Everyone working with children and their families, including social workers, health professionals, police, educational staff, voluntary organisations and the third sector, as well as members of the community, need to appreciate the important role they can play in remaining vigilant and providing robust support for child protection.”

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, Scottish Government, 2014)

**Rationale**

All staff in Cart Mill Family Centre have a responsibility to:

* Ensure all children are protected and their needs are met.
* Be familiar with our child protection procedures and guidance and implement those procedures promptly when there are concerns related to the care and welfare of a child (East Renfrewshire Education Child Protection Summary Card)
* Provide a supportive ethos in which children’s voices are listened to and acted upon
* Help children protect themselves by providing appropriate learning experiences within our health and wellbeing curriculum.
* Share information with other agencies which is of benefit to a child’s wellbeing.
* Contribute to assessment and recording of all child welfare and child protection concerns, using a record of concern and a chronology of significant events.
* Actively participate in annual training on child protection.

**Aim**

Within our centre we strive to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children which, promotes inclusion and achievement. All staff in Cart Mill Family Centre have a statutory and professional responsibility to take action if we have reason to believe a child is suffering, or is at risk of abuse.

**Objectives**

To provide:

* opportunities for children to express their thoughts and feelings.
* programmes of health and personal safety, central to the

Health & Wellbeing curriculum.

* regular staff development and training on Child Protection and Welfare.
* opportunities to discuss children with other agencies (JST, Transition meetings, etc.).
* information to parents concerning the centre’s Child Protection procedures, via the handbook, centre website and parental leaflet.
* systems which allows for information to be recorded, monitored and held securely.

**Introduction**

Child Protection - Legal Issues

* Child abuse is a criminal offence
* It can involve prosecution in the Criminal Courts in pursuit of the public interest.
* Child abuse is the concern of the child protection system.
* It can involve the Children’s Hearing acting to protect a child in the absence of criminal prosecutions or convictions.

The centre fully implements East Renfrewshire Council’s Guidelines on Child Protection. This is outlined in Standard Circular 57. A copy of which can be found in the staff policy folder, the centre office, as an appendix to this policy and the staff intranet. The circular details 5 main categories of abuse. These are as follows:

* Physical injury
* Physical neglect
* Sexual abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Non-Organic Failure to Thrive

Possible indicators for the above are detailed in SC 57.

If a member of staff has a concern or a child discloses information of a protection nature, then they must **report this to the centre Child Protection Officer immediately.**

The **Acting Head Teacher, Ana Castro is the centre Child Protection Officer**. In her absence, staff should make the Depute Head of Centre, **Val MacLean** aware.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff have a role and responsibility in ensuring that children are safe, well and protected. The five main responsibilities are:

1. Training
2. Prevention
3. Reporting
4. Interagency co-operation
5. Support

**Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher will have the overall responsibility for Child Protection issues and should be the first person staff or parent/carer informs in the event of any suspicions.

Other responsibilities include:

1. Annual in-service training of all staff regarding the council’s policy - ***Child Protection.***
2. Training of staff who join after whole staff in-service.
3. Maintaining a log of Child Protection training.
4. Preventing Child Protection incidents by ensuring the centre is a safe and secure place for children to attend.
5. Reporting / responding appropriately to any incidents.
6. Informing and co-operating with other agencies by attending meetings, completing reports, providing information.
7. Support children, staff and parents who are involved in the Child Protection process.

**Depute Head of Centre**

The Depute Head of Centre will take on the responsibilities and duties of the Head Teacher in her absence.

**All Education Staff**

Early learning and childcare staff are in a unique position. Children spend the majority of their time in the centre interacting with staff. Our educators are often the first person to observe a change in behaviour or the first person a child confides in. All staff must:

1. Attend Child Protection training and implement Guidelines as directed.
2. Complete their training log.
3. Use the curriculum to develop children’s knowledge and skills.
4. Report any incident to the HT immediately.
5. Complete any reports, attend any meetings or discuss any child with appropriate agencies.
6. Record significant ‘events’ in Care and Welfare Chronology.
7. Attend weekly meetings to discuss children’s learning and wellbeing with a member of the Senior Management Team.

**All Support Staff**

1. Attend Child Protection training and implement Guidelines as directed.
2. Complete training log.
3. Report any incident to the Head Teacher immediately.

**Parents**

1. Using given literature, familiarise themselves with both Council and Centre Child Protection policies **(Appendix 7).**
2. Inform the centre of any incidents.
3. Co-operate with the appropriate agencies and family centre.

**All staff**

**If you have concerns what should you do?**

* Listen – make time
* Stay clam
* Keep questions to a minimum
* Stick with What? Where? Who? When?
* Avoid why and how questions
* Reassure child – right to tell
* Tell the child what you are going to do next
* Act promptly and pass on your concerns to HT
* Record what child said in their own words

**What should I avoid doing?**

* Asking too many questions
* Making false promises i.e. confidentially
* Express shock or anger
* Make interpretations – report only what is said by the child
* Delay listening or passing on concerns
* Carry out your own investigation

**Recording and Reporting**

All Education Staff

All staff should report their concerns both verbally and in writing using the record of concern alert **(Appendix 2)**. This reporting format should be used to note any incident or event of significance in a child’s life. This may include attendance, late-coming, bereavement, incident from home, change in behaviour, etc. Staff should note the date and time and give a brief explanation of the concerns and share with the HT. The HT will update the Care and Welfare Chronology and decide on the action to be taken.

All Support Staff

Should inform the Head Teacher or a Depute Head of Centre of any incidents they feel should be recorded in the ‘Significant Events Chronology’ **(Appendix 3)**.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will record all significant events on the child’s Care and Welfare Chronology. She will also report to all involved agencies and parents on a regular basis.

When considering the immediate needs of a child once a concern about their possible safety is raised, it is essential to consider the following questions

* **Is this child at immediate risk?**
* **What is placing this child at immediate risk?**
* **What needs to happen to remove this risk now?**

HT will consider next steps:

* Will use the summary for responding to child protection concerns from The National Guidance on Child protection in Scotland. **(Appendix 1)**
* Will refer to Head of Service, JST, Social Services or other appropriate agency.
* Complete relevant referral paperwork and send copies to those outlined in SC 57.
* Using ‘Records of Concern’ **(Appendix 2)** and the ‘Significant Events Chronology’ (**Appendix 3)**, which is filed securely in the Head Teacher’s office, records all referrals. (A copy attached to this policy statement).
* Support child involved.
* Support staff who have reported concerns about a child***.***

**GIRFEC – Getting it right for every child**

The GIRFEC approach stresses the importance of risks and needs within a framework of the child’s whole world and wellbeing. Every child needs to be healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, included, responsible and above all, **safe**. The Wellbeing Indicators **(Appendix 4)** provide us with a broad framework for identifying a child’s needs and are a key element in the identification of concerns and in the management of risk.

**My World Triangle**

The My World Triangle **(Appendix 5)** focuses attention on the three dimensions of a child’s world: the child themselves; their family; and their wider environment. Once a concern has arisen we will use the triangle as a tool for gathering information as part of an investigation or to identify the factors that have caused the concern to arise. Using the My World Triangle to identify risk factors is the first step in assessing risk. We will look at how those factors impact on the individual child. The **Resilience Matrix (Appendix 6)** provides us with a framework for weighing up particular risks against protective factors for the individual child and their level of vulnerability or resilience.

**The Six Key Questions**

The six key questions will be considered when we plan for individual children’s wellbeing. These are

* What is getting in the way of this child’s wellbeing?
* Do I have all the information I need to help this child?
* What can I do *now* to help this child?
* What can education do to help this child?
* What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?
* What is the view of the child and the family?

**Monitoring and Review**

The Head Teacher, using the aims and objectives stated previously, will monitor the policy throughout. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Date policy drafted: 5th October 2015

Date policy adopted: 30th October 2015

Date of review: 18/02/2022