



Child Protection Policy

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Links to national policy:

The Health and Social Care Standards. My support, my life (Scottish Government, 2017)

HSCS: 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.24, 3.25
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Links to UNCRC Articles: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 32-37, 39

PART 1: Safeguarding children and child protection procedures

Introduction

Marina View Nursery is committed to providing high-quality care and learning for our children and supporting their families and our wider community. We are committed to safeguarding, protecting and promoting the wellbeing and rights of every child through a safe, respectful and nurturing culture.

All staff, students and volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children. They must remain aware of children's wellbeing and promptly identify, record and report any concerns in accordance with this policy and related nursery procedures.

This policy should be read alongside the following nursery policies and procedures:

Acceptable internet use policy	Online safety policy
CCTV policy	Promoting positive behaviour policy
Data protection and confidentiality policy	Safe and respectful care policy
Inclusion and equality policy	Safer recruitment of staff policy
Respectful Intimate care policy	Social networking policy
Late collection and non-collection of children policy	Additional Support Needs and Disability Policy
Emergency lock down policy	Staff behaviour policy
Lone working policy	Suitability of staff policy
Looked after children policy	Supervision of children
Missing child from nursery policy	Supervision of visitors' policy
Missing child from outings policies	Volunteer agreement
Mobile phone and electronic device use policy	Whistleblowing policy
Nappy changing policy	Young workers policy

Policy intention

To promote children's wellbeing, safety and rights we will:

- Create a nurturing and inclusive environment where children are supported to develop a positive sense of themselves.
- Ensure that staff provide children with positive, respectful and nurturing role models.
- Support children to develop independence, confidence and autonomy in ways appropriate to their age, stage of development and individual needs.
- Provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for all children
- Listen to children, take their views seriously and respond appropriately to what they communicate through their words, behaviour and actions.

We safeguard and promote the wellbeing of every child in our care and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Clear procedures are in place to help staff recognise, respond to, record and report concerns. As safeguarding and child protection extend across all areas of nursery practice, this policy should be read alongside the nursery's related policies and procedures.

All nursery staff understand that abuse, neglect and exploitation can affect children in any family or community. Staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote children's wellbeing and must be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm. As children spend significant time in the nursery, staff may be among the first to recognise a concern or receive information from a child that indicates they may need protection or support.

The safety, wellbeing and rights of every child in our care are paramount. Any concern about a child's safety or wellbeing will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly in accordance with this policy and local child protection procedures. We will work with parents and carers where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and with relevant agencies as part of a multi-agency approach, always acting in the child's best interests.

The nursery aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all decisions and actions, providing nurturing and responsive interactions that support children's wellbeing, confidence and resilience. Children will be supported, in ways appropriate to their age, development and communication needs, to understand personal safety, healthy choices and positive relationships.
- Take all reasonable steps to identify, assess and minimise risks to children while they are in the care of the nursery.
- Share relevant information promptly, lawfully and proportionately with those who need it to protect and support the child, in accordance with information-sharing and confidentiality procedures.
- Ensure all staff feel confident and supported to share information, report concerns and seek appropriate help for a child.
- Provide child protection information during induction and ensure staff understand the different types and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including harm caused by other children.
- Support staff to recognise less obvious signs that a child may be experiencing harm and understand the action they must take.
- Recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to harm, including children with additional support needs, care-experienced children and children affected by isolation, trauma or adverse childhood experiences.
- Ensure staff can recognise and respond appropriately to concerns relating to extremism or radicalisation in accordance with national and local procedures.
- Provide annual child protection updates, appropriate role-specific training and catch-up arrangements for anyone unable to attend.
- Make the policy available to parents and carers and inform them when significant changes are made.
- Report and refer concerns promptly, sharing relevant information in accordance with South Ayrshire child protection procedures.
- Review this policy at least annually, and sooner following significant changes to legislation, guidance or nursery practice.
- Protect children online through appropriate supervision, controls and safeguards.
- Recognise and respond to concerns or changes relating to staff conduct in accordance with the Staff Behaviour and Whistleblowing Policies.

We will support children through reassurance, comfort and sensitive, nurturing interactions. Children will be provided with inclusive experiences that build confidence, self-esteem and positive relationships and help them learn how to keep themselves safe.

Immediate Risk of Harm

If a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact Police Scotland on 999 without delay. Once emergency action has been taken, the Child Protection Coordinator or Manager must be informed as soon as it is safe to do so. Staff must never delay taking action because they are uncertain. Protecting the child is always the priority.

Recording concerns and disclosures

Staff must immediately report any concern, observation or disclosure to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute and make an accurate, objective written record as soon as possible. The record should include:

- The child's name, address, age and date of birth.
- The date and time of the observation, incident or disclosure.
- The child's exact words wherever possible.
- The position and description of any injuries or marks observed.
- A factual account of what was seen or heard, including the names of any witnesses.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, along with the date and time.
- Details of any action taken or discussion with parents or carers, where applicable.

Records must be signed and dated by the person completing them and countersigned by the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. They must be stored securely in the child's confidential child protection file, separately from their general nursery records.

If a child begins to share information about possible abuse or harm, staff must listen calmly and allow the child to speak at their own pace. Staff must not promise confidentiality, ask leading questions, investigate the concern or put words into the child's mouth. The child should be reassured that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult. The disclosure must be reported immediately and recorded accurately as soon as possible using the child's own words.

The Child Protection Coordinator or depute will follow South Ayrshire child protection procedures and contact Social Work or Police Scotland as appropriate. Concerns must be shared without delay, and the Care Inspectorate will be notified where required. All staff must cooperate fully with any child protection investigation and provide relevant information when requested.

Information relating to a concern, allegation or investigation must be treated confidentially and shared only with those who need it to protect the child or carry out their professional responsibilities.

Monitoring children's attendance

The nursery monitors children's attendance and patterns of absence as part of its responsibility to safeguard and promote children's wellbeing. Parents and carers should inform the nursery if their child will be absent due to illness, holidays or any other reason. They are responsible for keeping their contact and emergency-contact details up to date.

Unexplained or concerning absences will be followed up in a proportionate way, taking account of the child's usual attendance pattern, individual circumstances and any known concerns. Staff will contact the child's parents or carers and, where appropriate, use the child's emergency contacts to seek confirmation that the child is safe.

If contact cannot be established, or if there are concerns about the child's safety or wellbeing, the Child Protection Coordinator or depute will assess the information available and follow South Ayrshire child protection procedures. This may include seeking advice from or contacting Social Work or Police Scotland.

Where a child is on the Child Protection Register or subject to a Child Protection Plan, staff will follow the child's agreed attendance arrangements. Any unexplained absence will be reported promptly to the child's named social worker or other identified professional.

Informing parents

The nursery aims to work openly and in partnership with parents and carers. However, when a child protection concern arises, the Child Protection Coordinator or depute will seek advice from Social Work or Police Scotland before informing the child's parents or carers where necessary.

Parents or carers will normally be informed about concerns unless doing so could place the child or another person at greater risk, interfere with an investigation, lead to evidence being lost or place staff at risk. Where parents or carers are not informed, the reason and advice received will be recorded. Social Work or Police Scotland will advise who should communicate with the family and when.

Care-Experienced Children

Care-experienced children may include children who are currently looked after, have previously been looked after, live in kinship care or have experience of foster, residential or other care arrangements. Staff will provide consistent, nurturing and inclusive support and remain aware that individual children may have additional vulnerabilities or support needs.

To ensure that each child is supported and safeguarded appropriately, the nursery should be informed of:

- The child's legal status and current care arrangements.
- Who holds parental rights and responsibilities.
- Agreed contact, collection and emergency-contact arrangements.
- Any authority delegated to the child's carer, including consent for nursery activities, outings and medical treatment.
- The name and contact details of the child's social worker and any other relevant professionals.
- Any Child's Plan, Child Protection Plan, risk assessment or agreed attendance arrangements.

Information will be treated confidentially and shared only with staff and professionals who need it to support and protect the child.

Please refer to the Care-Experienced children policy for further details.

Child Protection Contacts

Nursery Child Protection Coordinator	Heather McMaster Nursery Manager	
Depute Child Protection Coordinator	Emily Packard Lead Practitioner	
South Ayrshire Initial Response Service – Children and Families Social Work Police Scotland	01292 267675 999 – immediate danger or emergency	Out of hours: 0800 328 7758 101 – non-emergency
Care Inspectorate	0345 600 9527	
Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)	0345 60 30 891	
NSPCC Helpline – advice or reporting concerns	0808 800 5000	

Types of Abuse (*National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021- updated 2023*)

Staff must be aware of the main categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse: Causing physical harm such as hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, suffocating, or fabricated or induced illness.
- Emotional abuse: Persistent emotional ill-treatment that adversely affects a child's emotional development.
- Sexual abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including online abuse.
- Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.
- Domestic abuse: Exposure to domestic abuse is recognised as a form of child abuse under Scottish legislation.

Children may experience more than one form of abuse, and abuse may be perpetrated by adults or other children.

PART 2: Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused within a family, institution, or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Possible indicators of child abuse may include:

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Less obvious indicators that a child may need protection or support can include:

Emotional states: Fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem.

Behaviour: Aggressive, habitual body rocking.

Interpersonal behaviours:

- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness to strangers including healthcare professionals
- Excessive clinginess, persistently resorting to gaining attention
- Demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent parent disapproval
- Failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed
- Coercive controlling behaviour towards parents
- Lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions

- Very young children showing excessive comforting behaviours when witnessing parental or carer distress.

Child-on-child abuse

Children can experience abuse or harmful behaviour from other children. This may include bullying, physical harm, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviour, discrimination, coercion or online abuse.

Any concern about child-on-child abuse must be taken seriously, recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures. The immediate safety and wellbeing of all children involved will be considered, and appropriate supervision, support and risk-management measures will be put in place.

Children displaying harmful behaviour may also have experienced abuse, neglect or trauma and may require protection and support. Staff will avoid labelling children as a "victim" or "perpetrator" and will seek advice or make referrals to relevant agencies where required.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child. It may involve hitting, smacking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical injury. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Possible indicators include unexplained or repeated injuries, injuries in unusual areas, explanations that are inconsistent with the injury or the child's development, or a delay in seeking medical attention. Staff should remain aware that babies and young children may be particularly vulnerable because they may be unable to explain what has happened.

Ordinary childhood accidents, cuts and grazes will be recorded and managed in accordance with the nursery's Accident and Incident Procedures. Any injury or explanation that causes concern must be reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute and recorded in accordance with this policy.

If physical abuse is suspected, the concern must be reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Fabricated illness (FI)

Fabricated or induced illness is a form of physical abuse in which a parent or carer exaggerates, fabricates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in a child. This may include seeking unnecessary medical treatment or investigations, interfering with treatment, medication or test results, or deliberately causing illness or injury.

Staff must not challenge the parent or carer or attempt to investigate the concern. Any patterns, observations or information causing concern must be recorded accurately and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the partial or total removal of, or injury to, the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in Scotland and is a form of child abuse. FGM can cause severe pain, bleeding, infection, long-term physical and emotional harm, complications during childbirth and, in some cases, death.

FGM may be carried out during infancy, childhood or adolescence. Staff should be aware of possible indicators that a child may be at risk, including references to a special procedure or celebration, planned extended travel abroad, family or community pressure, or a family history of FGM.

Any concern that a child may be at risk of, or may have experienced, FGM must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. South Ayrshire child protection procedures must then be followed. If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, Police Scotland must be contacted on 999 without delay. Staff must not contact the family about the concern without advice from Social Work or Police Scotland.

Further guidance: [Responding to Female Genital Mutilation in Scotland: Multi-agency Guidance](#)

Breast Flattening

Breast flattening, sometimes referred to as breast ironing, is the practice of pressing, massaging, pounding or applying heated objects to a child's developing breasts in an attempt to delay or stop their development. It may be carried out in the belief that it will protect the child from sexual harassment, abuse, abduction or forced marriage.

The practice can cause significant physical and emotional harm, including pain, burns, infection, abscesses, cysts, tissue damage and changes to breast development. Breast flattening is a form of physical abuse.

Any concern that a child may be at risk of, or may have experienced, breast flattening must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, enticing, pressuring or manipulating a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child understands what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, or non-contact activities such as involving a child in sexual images or conversations, exposing them to sexual activity, encouraging sexualised behaviour or grooming them in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can occur in person or online, and technology may be used to facilitate abuse. It can be carried out by adults of any gender or by other children.

Possible indicators may include:

- Sexual knowledge, language, drawings or play that are significantly beyond what would be expected for the child's age and development.
- Repeated or concerning sexualised behaviour involving toys, objects, adults or other children.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, confidence, eating, sleeping or concentration.
- Becoming withdrawn, fearful, insecure or unusually clingy.
- Fear of a particular person or reluctance to be alone with them.
- Distress about clothing being removed or intimate care.
- Regression to earlier behaviours.
- Bruising, bleeding, discharge, pain or soreness around the genital or anal area.

Children's curiosity about bodies and relationships can be a normal part of development. Staff should consider the child's age, development, context, frequency and level of distress and seek advice whenever behaviour or information causes concern.

Any concern about possible sexual abuse must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the child needs or wants, or for the advantage of the person causing or facilitating the abuse.

A child may be sexually exploited even when the activity appears voluntary. Children cannot consent to their own exploitation. CSE may involve physical contact or occur through technology and online communication.

Staff must remain aware of the possibility of CSE, including where concerns arise through a child's behaviour, play, words, family circumstances or online experiences. Any concern must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent behaviour that has, or is likely to have, a serious adverse effect on a child's emotional development and wellbeing. It may occur on its own but is also present in other forms of abuse.

Emotional abuse may include:

- Making a child feel worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only when meeting another person's needs.
- Repeatedly silencing, humiliating, frightening, threatening, ridiculing or rejecting a child.
- Placing expectations on a child that are inappropriate for their age, development or individual needs.
- Preventing a child from exploring, learning, forming relationships or developing appropriate independence.
- Exploiting or corrupting a child.
- Causing a child to see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse.
- Bullying, including online bullying, or deliberately isolating a child.

Possible indicators may include delayed development, changes in speech or communication, low confidence or self-esteem, extreme fear of making mistakes, anxiety in new situations, withdrawal, distress, repetitive self-soothing behaviours or extremes of passivity or aggression.

Any concern about possible emotional abuse must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs in a way that causes, or is likely to cause, significant harm to their health, wellbeing or development. A single incident may also cause significant harm. Early indicators of neglect should be recognised and responded to so that support and protection can be provided as soon as possible.

Neglect may involve a failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or a safe home environment.
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Provide appropriate supervision or safe caregivers.
- Seek or follow necessary medical care or treatment.
- Support a child's learning and attendance.
- Respond consistently to a child's emotional, developmental and communication needs.
- Provide appropriate nurturing, stimulation and comfort.

The GIRFEC SHANARRI wellbeing indicators help staff consider whether a child is safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Concerns may include poor growth, hunger, consistently unsuitable clothing, poor hygiene, untreated health needs, developmental delay, tiredness, distress, withdrawal or changes in behaviour or attendance.

Poverty, insecure housing, disability or a family needing additional support do not in themselves mean that a child is being neglected. Staff must consider the child's lived experience, the care being provided and whether their needs are being met, while ensuring that families are offered appropriate support.

Any concern about possible neglect must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Cuckooing

Child criminal exploitation occurs when an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. A child may be exploited even when their involvement appears voluntary. Exploitation may occur in person or through technology and can involve threats, violence, intimidation or grooming.

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which organised groups use children or vulnerable adults to transport, store or sell illegal drugs or money between different areas. Cuckooing occurs when offenders take over the home of a vulnerable person or family and use it as a base for criminal activity.

Although young nursery children are unlikely to be directly recruited, they may be placed at risk through criminal activity involving parents, carers, older siblings, other household members or people using the family home. Possible indicators may include:

- Unfamiliar adults frequently entering or leaving the child's home.
- Increased vehicles or activity around the property.
- Windows covered or curtains remaining closed for extended periods.
- Signs of drug use, violence, intimidation or antisocial behaviour.
- Unexplained injuries, distress or significant changes in the child's behaviour or wellbeing.
- The child or family going missing or becoming difficult to contact.
- Unexplained money, gifts or possessions within the family.

Any concern about criminal exploitation, county lines or cuckooing must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Contextual safeguarding

Children may experience harm or exploitation in places and relationships outside their immediate family. This is known as extra-familial harm and may occur within the wider community, early learning or education settings, peer groups, organised activities or online.

Staff will consider the wider circumstances surrounding a child and family rather than viewing concerns in isolation. The nursery will work with parents and carers, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and with relevant agencies to identify risks, share information and provide appropriate protection and support.

Any concern about extra-familial harm must be recorded and reported to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute in accordance with the nursery's child protection procedures.

Domestic abuse / "Honour-based" violence / Forced marriages

Domestic abuse can cause significant physical and emotional harm to children, whether they see or hear the abuse, experience its effects or are directly involved. Staff must consider the impact of domestic abuse on the child and on the ability of the non-abusing parent or carer to keep themselves and the child safe.

"Honour-based" abuse describes harmful practices carried out to protect or defend the perceived honour of a family or community. It may include coercive control, threats, physical or emotional abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation or restrictions on a person's freedom.

A forced marriage is one in which one or both people do not, or cannot, freely consent and pressure or abuse is used. It is different from an arranged marriage, where both people freely consent.

Any concern must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. Staff must not approach the family about the concern without advice from Social Work or Police Scotland, as doing so may increase the risk to the child or another person.

Extremism and radicalisation

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland, education and childcare providers must have due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent duty forms part of the nursery's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Radicalisation is the process through which a person may come to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorism. It may involve grooming in person or online, manipulation, exploitation, exposure to harmful material or encouragement to support or take part in violent activity.

The nursery promotes inclusion, respect, children's rights and positive relationships. Staff will remain aware of changes in a child's behaviour, language, play, relationships or family circumstances that may indicate exposure to harmful extremist influences. No single sign proves that radicalisation is taking place, and concerns must be considered in context.

Any concern must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. Staff must not investigate the concern themselves. The Child Protection Coordinator will follow South Ayrshire procedures and seek advice from the appropriate agencies, including Police Scotland where required. If there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must call 999 without delay.

Further guidance: [Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland](#)

Online safety

Digital technology provides valuable opportunities for learning and communication but can also expose children to harm. Online abuse may occur entirely online or technology may be used to facilitate abuse taking place offline.

The four main areas of online risk are:

- **Content:** exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, including sexual content, violence, misinformation, racism or extremist material.
- **Contact:** harmful interaction with other users, including grooming, exploitation, coercion or adults posing as children.
- **Conduct:** behaviour that causes or increases the risk of harm, including bullying, sharing private information or creating, requesting or distributing intimate images.
- **Commerce:** risks including inappropriate advertising, gambling, phishing, scams and unauthorised purchases.

The nursery will use appropriate supervision, controls, filters and approved devices to protect children online. Staff must follow the Online Safety, Acceptable Internet Use, Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Use, and Social Networking Policies.

Any online-safety concern must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. Staff must not download, copy, forward or share suspected illegal or abusive content. The Child Protection Coordinator will follow South Ayrshire child protection procedures and contact Social Work or Police Scotland where required. If there is an immediate risk of harm, staff must call 999.

Reports relating to online sexual abuse or exploitation may also be made through the [CEOP Safety Centre](#). Suspected online child sexual abuse imagery or webpages may be reported to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#), following advice from the Child Protection Coordinator or relevant agencies.

Child trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking involves arranging or facilitating a child's travel, movement, transfer, harbouring or receipt for the purpose of exploitation. It can occur within Scotland, elsewhere in the UK or across international borders. A child does not need to have been moved a long distance, and apparent consent does not remove the possibility of trafficking or exploitation.

Modern slavery includes slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Children may be exploited through sexual abuse, forced labour, domestic servitude, criminal activity, financial exploitation, forced begging or other harmful practices. They may also experience physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

Possible indicators may include a child:

- Appearing frightened, withdrawn, distressed or under another person's control.
- Having an unclear or inconsistent account of where they live or who cares for them.
- Being accompanied by an adult who avoids questions or speaks for the child.
- Having limited belongings, unsuitable clothing or unmet health and developmental needs.
- Moving frequently or disappearing unexpectedly.
- Being prevented from interacting freely with others.

Any concern about child trafficking, exploitation or modern slavery must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. South Ayrshire child protection procedures must be followed and Social Work or Police Scotland contacted as appropriate. If a child is believed to be in immediate danger, staff must call 999 without delay.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB)

Child abuse linked to faith or belief occurs when beliefs about spirituality, possession, witchcraft, evil, bad luck or a child's behaviour are used to justify harming, frightening, rejecting or exploiting a child. Abuse may include physical punishment, harmful rituals, emotional abuse, neglect, isolation, withholding medical care, abandonment, trafficking or other forms of exploitation.

Possible indicators may include a child being described as evil, possessed, cursed or responsible for misfortune; unexplained injuries; fear of particular rituals or individuals; unusual fasting or restrictions; isolation from others; or significant distress or changes in behaviour.

The nursery respects the faith, culture and beliefs of children and families. However, no belief or cultural practice justifies abuse or overrides a child's right to safety and protection.

Any concern must be recorded and reported immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. Staff must not confront the family or faith representative without advice from Social Work or Police Scotland, as doing so could increase the risk to the child.

Staff Quick Guide – Reporting a Child Protection Concern

1. **Act immediately** – If the child is in immediate danger, call Police Scotland on 999.
2. **Listen and observe** – Remain calm, listen carefully and take the child seriously. Do not ask leading questions.
3. **Record** – Write a clear, factual record as soon as possible, including the date, time, observations and the child's exact words.
4. **Report** – Inform the Child Protection Coordinator or depute immediately. Do not wait until the end of the session or working day.
5. **Escalate** – Contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work or Police Scotland directly if:
 - The Child Protection Coordinator and depute are unavailable.
 - The concern involves either coordinator or another member of management.
 - You believe the concern has not been acted upon appropriately.
 - The child remains at risk.

Do not investigate, promise confidentiality, take photographs of injuries, confront the person believed to have caused harm or discuss the concern with anyone who does not need to know.

South Ayrshire Initial Response Service: 01292 267675

Out of hours: 0800 328 7758

Police Scotland: 101 or 999 in an emergency

PART 3: Reporting procedures

Action by Staff

The role of staff is to observe, listen, record and report. Staff must:

- Take immediate action to protect the child. If the child is in immediate danger, contact Police Scotland on 999.
- Listen carefully and observe the child's behaviour, presentation and communication.
- Remain calm, take the child seriously and allow them to speak at their own pace.
- Ask only open and necessary questions, such as "Tell me what happened." Staff must not ask leading questions or attempt to investigate.
- Never promise secrecy or complete confidentiality. Explain that the information must be shared with people who can help keep the child safe.
- Record exactly what was seen, heard or disclosed, including the date, time, context and the child's own words.
- Describe any injuries or marks clearly and use an approved body map where appropriate. Staff must not take photographs.
- Sign and date the record and report the concern immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute. Recording must never delay urgent reporting or action.
- Ensure the record is stored securely in the child's confidential child protection file. A relevant entry should also be made in the child's chronology in accordance with nursery procedures.
- Contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work or Police Scotland directly if the coordinators are unavailable, the concern involves them or the member of staff believes the concern has not been acted upon appropriately.

Action by the Manager or Child Protection Coordinator

All concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing must be taken seriously and responded to promptly. The Manager or Child Protection Coordinator will:

- Consider whether the child is at immediate risk of harm. If so, Police Scotland must be contacted on 999 without delay.
- Listen to the staff member reporting the concern and ensure that an accurate, signed and dated record has been completed.
- Gather relevant information already held by the nursery, including previous concerns, attendance information and chronology entries. This must not become an internal investigation.
- Contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work without delay when there is concern that a child may have experienced, or may be at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Clearly explain the concern, the basis for it and any immediate safety issues.
- Record the date and time of the contact, the name and role of the professional spoken to, the advice received and all actions taken.
- Complete and submit the relevant Notification of Concern documentation where required by South Ayrshire procedures.
- Follow professional advice about whether, when and by whom parents or carers should be informed.
- Notify the Care Inspectorate where the concern or incident meets its notification requirements.
- Ensure all records are stored securely in the child's confidential child protection file and that the chronology is updated.
- Follow up promptly if an expected response is not received or if concerns about the child's safety remain.

- Continue to share relevant information and cooperate fully with Social Work, Police Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and other agencies involved in protecting the child.

If a member of staff cannot report the concern internally, the concern involves a member of management or they believe appropriate action has not been taken, they must contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work or Police Scotland directly. Staff may also seek confidential advice from the NSPCC Helpline. Contact numbers are displayed in the staff room, reception area and Child Protection Folder.

Responding to a spontaneous disclosure from a child

If a child begins to share information that suggests they may have experienced abuse, neglect or harm, the member of staff must:

- Give the child their full attention and move to a quiet place where possible, while remaining visible to others.
- Remain calm and use open, reassuring body language.
- Listen carefully and allow the child to speak at their own pace without interrupting.
- Take the child seriously and acknowledge their feelings.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling an adult and that what happened is not their fault.
- Use the child's own words and ask only open questions where essential to clarify what they are saying, such as "Tell me more about that."
- Avoid expressing shock, disbelief, anger or judgement.
- Never promise secrecy or complete confidentiality. Explain that the information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Never question the child repeatedly, investigate the disclosure or confront the person believed to have caused harm.
- Explain, in a way the child can understand, what will happen next.
- Report the disclosure immediately to the Child Protection Coordinator or depute.
- Make an accurate, signed and dated record as soon as possible, using the child's exact words. Recording must not delay urgent action.

The Child Protection Coordinator or depute will follow the nursery's reporting procedures and contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work or Police Scotland as appropriate.

Staffing and volunteering

Marina View Nursery is committed to providing a safe environment for every child through appropriate staffing, safer recruitment, supervision and ongoing assessment of staff suitability.

Anyone carrying out a regulated role with children, whether paid or unpaid, must be a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme for work with children before beginning that role. The nursery will obtain the appropriate PVG Scheme disclosure and complete all required suitability checks before allowing the person to undertake regulated duties. PVG membership is subject to ongoing monitoring and, from April 2026, time-limited membership and renewal arrangements under the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.

The nursery's Child Protection Coordinator is Heather McMaster, Nursery Manager. The Depute Child Protection Coordinator is Emily Packard. Both will undertake appropriate role-specific training and keep their knowledge of national and South Ayrshire child protection procedures up to date.

The nursery will:

- Maintain adequate staffing levels and deploy staff effectively to support children's safety, wellbeing and supervision.

- Obtain and verify two satisfactory written references, identity information, employment history, qualifications and relevant registration before confirming employment.
- Complete all appropriate PVG and suitability checks for staff, apprentices, students and volunteers according to the duties they will undertake.
- Ensure students and volunteers are appropriately supervised and are not given responsibilities beyond their experience, training or authorised role.
- Ensure visitors, contractors and external workers sign in, receive relevant safeguarding information and remain appropriately supervised. They will not have unsupervised access to children unless their role requires it and all necessary suitability checks have been completed.
- Maintain secure visitor procedures to prevent unauthorised access to children or nursery areas.
- Provide child protection information and reporting procedures during induction and before a new worker has unsupervised responsibility for children.
- Provide annual child protection updates, role-appropriate training and catch-up arrangements, maintaining an accurate record of attendance and completion.
- Ensure all staff understand and follow the Staff Behaviour and Whistleblowing Policies and report concerns about a colleague or manager immediately.
- Provide regular supervision in which safeguarding practice, conduct, training and support needs can be discussed.
- Maintain working arrangements that support appropriate oversight while respecting children's privacy and dignity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure Scotland where the legal referral criteria are met following harmful behaviour and the permanent removal, or intended removal, of an individual from a regulated role.

Possible concerns about staff conduct may include inappropriate comments or communication, favouritism, unnecessary one-to-one contact, breaches of professional boundaries, inappropriate use or sharing of images, excessive secrecy or attempts to communicate privately with children or families. This is not an exhaustive list. Any concern must be reported and acted upon immediately.

Confidentiality

Child protection information is confidential and must be shared only with people who need it to protect and support the child or carry out their professional responsibilities. Staff, students and volunteers must not discuss concerns, disclosures or investigations with colleagues who are not involved, other families or anyone outside the nursery. Inappropriate disclosure may result in disciplinary action.

The nursery will comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data protection law does not prevent information from being shared where this is necessary to protect a child. Consent is not required when seeking it could place the child or another person at greater risk, interfere with an investigation or cause an unreasonable delay.

Information shared must be relevant, necessary, proportionate, accurate, timely and secure. The reason for sharing—or deciding not to share—must be recorded, along with who received the information and any advice or action taken.

Child protection records will be stored securely and separately from general nursery records, with access restricted to authorised staff. Information will be retained and transferred in accordance with the nursery's Data Protection and Confidentiality Procedures and South Ayrshire child protection guidance.

Support to families

Marina View Nursery is committed to building respectful, trusting and supportive relationships with children and families. Parents and carers will be treated with dignity, fairness and without judgement throughout any child protection process.

Where concerns are being assessed or investigated, the nursery will continue to support and welcome the child and family wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Any arrangements affecting the child's attendance, collection, contact with adults or participation in nursery will follow advice from Social Work or Police Scotland and will place the child's safety and wellbeing first.

The nursery will work cooperatively with the family and relevant professionals to provide continuity, reassurance and appropriate support for the child. Staff will not discuss the concern or investigation with parents or carers where they have been advised that doing so could place someone at risk or interfere with the child protection process.

Requests to access child protection records will be handled in accordance with data protection law and professional advice. Information may be withheld or restricted where disclosure could cause harm, prejudice an investigation or disclose confidential information relating to another person.

PART 4: Recruitment, selection, induction and training

Recruitment and selection

Marina View Nursery follows its Safer Recruitment of Staff Policy to reduce the risk of unsuitable individuals gaining access to children. Recruitment decisions will be fair, consistent and focused on each applicant's suitability, values, conduct, qualifications and ability to safeguard and support children.

Recruitment and selection procedures will include, where relevant:

- A clear job description and person specification that includes safeguarding responsibilities.
- A completed application form and scrutiny of employment history, including discussion of unexplained gaps.
- Verification of identity, qualifications, professional registration and right to work.
- A structured interview that explores values, experience, professional boundaries and safeguarding knowledge.
- At least two satisfactory written references, including the most recent relevant employer, obtained and verified before employment begins.
- The appropriate PVG Scheme disclosure for anyone undertaking a regulated role with children.
- Any additional suitability or regulatory checks required by the Care Inspectorate, SSSC or legislation.

No individual will begin a regulated role or have unsupervised responsibility for children until all required checks have been completed and assessed as satisfactory. Information disclosed through recruitment or PVG processes will be considered fairly, lawfully and in relation to the requirements and risks of the role.

The nursery has additional responsibilities towards apprentices, students and workers under the age of 18, who are legally children. Appropriate support, supervision and risk assessment will be provided throughout their employment or placement.

Induction and probation for staff

All new staff, apprentices, students and volunteers will receive child protection information appropriate to their role before working with children. This will include:

- The identity and responsibilities of the Child Protection Coordinator and depute.
- How to recognise, record and report concerns.
- How to respond to a disclosure.
- Immediate-risk and emergency procedures.
- Professional boundaries, staff conduct and whistleblowing.
- Confidentiality and information sharing.
- Relevant South Ayrshire child protection procedures.

During their first week, new staff will receive a copy of this policy and must confirm that they have read and understood it. The line manager will discuss the policy with them and check their understanding before they have unsupervised responsibility for children.

Required child protection learning must be completed within the timescales set during induction and probation. Staff will receive an annual child protection update, with catch-up arrangements for anyone unable to attend, alongside further training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Child protection knowledge and practice will be discussed during supervision and probation reviews. The nursery will maintain accurate records of induction, training, attendance, understanding and any identified support or development needs.

Learners on placements or in employment

The nursery will ensure that learners, students and apprentices understand and agree to follow this policy and all related safeguarding procedures. They will receive child protection information appropriate to their role before beginning work with children and will be given clear guidance about supervision, professional boundaries, confidentiality and reporting concerns.

Learners will be appropriately supervised and will not be left with responsibilities beyond their competence, experience, training or authorised role. The nursery will liaise with the school, college, training provider or employer where appropriate to ensure that safeguarding responsibilities and support arrangements are understood.

Learners, apprentices and employees under the age of 18 are legally children and are entitled to the same protection as any other child. An individual risk assessment will be completed where required, taking account of their age, experience, working hours, duties, supervision and any additional support needs.

Any concern that a learner under the age of 18 may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation must be reported and managed through the nursery's child protection procedures. Concerns about an adult learner will be responded to through the appropriate safeguarding, employment or adult-support-and-protection procedures.

Professional Conduct and Ongoing Suitability

All staff, students and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional conduct and remain suitable to work with or have contact with children. They must inform the Manager promptly of any change in circumstances that may affect their suitability, professional registration or PVG Scheme membership, in accordance with their contractual and legal responsibilities.

All staff must follow the Staff Behaviour, Whistleblowing, Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Use, Social Networking and Online Safety Policies. Any concern about the conduct, behaviour or suitability of a colleague, volunteer, student, contractor or member of management must be reported immediately.

Where the concern involves the Manager or cannot be reported safely through the nursery's management structure, staff must contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work, Police Scotland or the Care Inspectorate directly.

Allegations against those working or volunteering with children

Any allegation or concern that a member of staff, student, volunteer, contractor or other person in a position of trust may have harmed a child, placed a child at risk or behaved in a way that questions their suitability must be taken seriously and reported immediately. This applies whether the alleged incident occurred within the nursery or elsewhere.

The concern must be reported to the Manager or Child Protection Coordinator. If the concern involves that person, it must be reported to the Owner/Registered Provider or directly to South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work, Police Scotland or the Care Inspectorate.

The person managing the allegation will:

- Take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and any other children who may be at risk.
- Contact Police Scotland on 999 if there is an immediate danger.
- Record the allegation accurately, including the date, time, source of the information and the exact words used.
- Contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work or Police Scotland without delay and follow their advice.
- Notify the Care Inspectorate in accordance with its notification requirements.
- Avoid interviewing the child, the person subject to the allegation or potential witnesses beyond what is necessary to establish and report the immediate concern.
- Preserve all relevant records and evidence and maintain confidentiality.
- Follow professional advice about when and how the person subject to the allegation, the child's parents or carers and other staff should be informed.

Suspension is a neutral safeguarding measure and is not an assumption of guilt. It will be considered on an individual basis, alongside other possible protective measures, following professional and employment advice.

The nursery will cooperate fully with any Police, Social Work, Care Inspectorate or professional-regulatory investigation. Any internal disciplinary process will be coordinated carefully so that it does not compromise an external investigation.

Appropriate support will be offered to the child, family, the person subject to the allegation and affected staff while maintaining necessary confidentiality.

Following the outcome, the nursery will take appropriate action in accordance with employment law, disciplinary procedures and professional advice. Where the legal criteria are met, referrals or notifications will be made to Disclosure Scotland, the SSSC, the Care Inspectorate and any other relevant professional body.

Marina View Nursery is committed to protecting children and promoting their safety, wellbeing and rights. Anyone who believes that a child protection concern has not been responded to appropriately must raise the matter without delay through the nursery's Whistleblowing Procedure or contact South Ayrshire Children and Families Social Work, Police Scotland or the Care Inspectorate directly.

No person will be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

Legal framework and guidance

This policy is informed by current Scottish legislation, national guidance and South Ayrshire child protection procedures, including:

Legislation

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011.
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, as amended.
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.
- Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.
- Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011.
- Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020.
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

National and Local Guidance

- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023.
- South Ayrshire Child Protection and Safeguarding Guidance 2025.
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) policy and practice guidance.
- Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland 2024.
- Health and Social Care Standards: *My Support, My Life*.
- SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers.
- Relevant Care Inspectorate guidance and notification requirements.