**Child Protection Policy**

Everyone using the nursery should recognise that keeping children safe, in every aspect of their lives, is a priority. In adopting and implementing Child Protection Procedures, the nursery is working together with all childcare agencies, following practice and policy designed to protect children across Scotland. Apple Tree Nursery will work with children, parents, external agencies, use the GIRFEC principles (child focused, early intervention, working together, understanding wellbeing) and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children to give them the best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse. Apple Tree Nursery will follow Perth and Kinross Child Protection guidelines. These can be found on the Perth and Kinross website. [Perth & Kinross Council - Information for practitioners (pkc.gov.uk)](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/17670/Information-for-practitioners)

All staff are aware that a child’s named person is their Health Visitor. This information is located in the child’s file. All staff are aware of the importance of recording concerns and chronologies.

A concern is:

* A worry
* A change
* A response
* A disclosure
* A gut feeling

All staff will have a PVG check before working with children. Any volunteers/students in the nursery will never be left alone with children and will never perform duties such as nappy changing unless we have a full PVG check. All visitors/contractors to the nursery will be accompanied whilst on the premises especially when in the areas that children use.

Nursery is aware that COVID-19 has had a major impact on children, young people and families. The vulnerability of some children has increased because of additional pressures placed on families and communities. Many have lost family members or friends and have had to manage grief without the usual support networks. Some children have been at risk or may have suffered from neglect where that would not normally have been the case. Some children and young people have been exposed to more risks online and some families have suffered the impact of poverty caused by challenges to the economy. Lockdown may have created new risks to woman and children experiencing or recovering from domestic violence and it may also have created circumstances where instances of domestic abuse and coercive control have increased in frequency and additional pressures placed upon families may have lead to the deterioration in the mental health of parents/carers, children and young people.

**Categories of Child Abuse**

**Physical**

Deliberately hurting of a child through physical violence which can result in injuries, illness, death.

**Signs:**

* Injuries that appear non-accidental
* Child in pain or discomfort
* Unconvincing or inconsistent explanation about the injury
* Delay or avoidance accessing treatment

**Procedure:**

* Any sign of a mark or injury to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded.
* Staff member will discuss with management.
* The incident may be discussed with parent/carer.
* Such discussions will be recorded.
* If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, Perth and Kinross Council Child Protection team will be notified.

**Emotional**

Ongoing emotional maltreatment or neglect which seriously damages the chjild’s emotional health and development

Signs:

* Child wary, anxious, or lacking in confidence or overly affectionate towards or relative stranger
* Child aggressive to other children or animals
* Child harms themselves, uses alcohol or drugs or has thoughts of suicide
* Parent or carer says cruel or berating things to the child
* Parent shows a lack of interest in child and may persistently ignore them or be absent

**Procedure:**

* Staff member will record and discuss with management.
* The concern may be discussed with the parent/carer.
* Such discussions will be recorded.
* If there appears to be any questions regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to Perth and Kinross Council’s Child Protection Team.

**Sexual**

Children are forced or coerced to take part in sexual activities. No physical contact needed. It could be online. Child Sexual Exploitation is when a person, of any age takes advantage of power imbalance to force or entice a child under 18 years of age into engaging in sexual activity in return for something

**Signs Sexual Abuse:**

* Child suddenly starts to behave differently
* Child seems frightened or reluctant to see a person(s)
* Child has sexual knowledge or behaviour that is not expected of their age/stage of development
* Child has injuries or pain, symptoms of STI and /or pregnancy

**Signs of Sexual Exploitation:**

The same indicators of sexual abuse plus..

* Relationship with controlling adults
* Regular episodes of being missing from home or exclusion, truancy or unexplained absences from school or college
* Evidence of/suspicion of physical or sexual assault
* Unplanned pregnancy/repeat sexual transmitted infections, terminations; high number of sexual partners

**Procedure:**

* Staff member will record and discuss with management.
* The concern may be discussed with the parent/carer
* Such discussions will be recorded
* If there appears to be any questions regarding the circumstances, the matter will be referred to Perth and Kinross Council’s Child Protection Team.

**Neglect**

Ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health and development and not protecting them from physical and emotional harm

Signs:

* Being hungry, appearing unwashed, soiled clothing or the wrong clothing for the weather. Untreated nappy rash in infants.
* Health or development eg dental decay, missed medical appointments, poor language development, repeated accidental injuries and/or recurrent infections.
* Unsuitable living conditions
* Poor levels of supervision from adults from physical or emotional harm
* Being left alone or having responsibilities not suitable for age and stage

**Procedure:**

* Staff member will record and discuss with management.
* The concern may be discussed with the parent/carer.
* Such discussion will be recorded.
* If there appear to be any questions regarding the circumstances Perth and Kinross Council Child Protection Team will be notified.

**Vulnerability, harm and risk**

Vulnerability means characteristics of the child, family circle and wider community which may threaten or challenge healthy development. Children and young people can be vulnerable and at higher risk of abuse and neglect because of

* Domestic abuse
* Problematic parent/carer drug/alcohol abuse
* Parental mental health
* Parental learning disability

Should any member of staff have concerns for the wellbeing or harm or risk of harm of any child they will immediately inform the Child Protection Officer (Denise Kelly, Deputy Manager) If a nursery manager is not available, staff should contact Child Protection Duty Team for advice. An Early Years Practitioners responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse. However, staff will keep accurate records of their observations and record in the child’s own words, anything said to them or others in connection with the suspected abuse.

* Nature of suspicion
* Details of injury
* Times/dates and any other relevant information
* Dates and times and names of any other adults involved with the child

It is always important to listen to children. If a child makes a disclosure, it is extremely important that the person who the child has disclosed to:

* Stays calm and doesn’t let their reactions show
* Listens carefully, using body language to encourage the child to keep talking
* If necessary checks understanding by repeating their words or using a phrase such as “so you are saying.” ”Can you tell me where this happened”
* Does not promise confidentiality, share the concern immediately with Child Protection Officer (Denise Kelly)
* Writes down what has been said, as soon as possible, sign and date the record

It is the policy of the nursery to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. The welfare of the children in our care is of paramount importance and any concern we may have will be considered seriously by the Nursery staff. If management feel that the child may be put further at risk by disclosing concerns to the parents, then management reserve the right to contact Perth and Kinross Council Child Protection Team for advice without first seeking parental consent. If the Child Protection team cannot be reached and the child is in immediate danger then nursery will report concerns directly to the police.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, management will contact Care Inspectorate, SSSC and Perth and Kinross Council Child Protection Team.

**Staff Training**

All staff at Apple Tree Nursery are required to attend external and online training on Child Protection matters and ensure that they are familiar with Child Protection policies and procedures.

The nursery aims regarding child protection:

* To ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of nursery staff.
* To ensure that confidentiality, unless a child protection concern is shared.
* To ensure that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed including by other children i.e. bullying.
* To ensure that all staff are familiar with policies and procedures.
* To ensure that parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with the nursery and are kept informed of all updates when they occur.
* To regularly review and update this policy.

**Who to contact:**

**The Child Protection and Duty Team (24 hours)**

To make referrals or to speak to a team member for advice

Telephone – 01738 476768

[Childline](http://www.childline.org.uk/) on 0800 1111.

[Crimestoppers](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/): call 0800 555 111.

Police Scotland: call 101 (or in an emergency 999).

[ParentLine Scotland](http://www.children1st.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/search-our-services/parentline-scotland/): call 0800 028 2233 or email: parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk. ParentLine's opening hours are from 9am-10pm (Mon-Fri) and 12 noon-8pm at weekends.

[NSPCC](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/): If you are an adult and worried about a child you can call the 24 hour NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.