

Safeguarding Children Policy – Updated 18/02/2021

“All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected. The welfare of children is paramount” Scottish Executive 2004

The safeguarding of children is **everyone’s duty** and settings have a responsibility under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes:

- Preventing the impairment of children’s health and development.
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

This policy aims to provide all members of staff, children and young people, and their families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring that all children in the service are protected from harm. (SSSC Code 3.2 & 5.7). This includes:

- To support children’s development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To raise awareness of the need to safeguard children, responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Adopting child protection guidelines for staff and volunteers, through procedures detailed in this policy, and the SSSC codes of conduct. (SSSC Code 3.2)
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To support children who have suffered abuse in accordance with their child protection plan.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- Carefully follow the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers, ensuring that all adults within our setting who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.
- To set out a structured procedure within the setting in cases of suspected abuse.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies such as Social Services, Falkirk Child Protection Committee, and any other adult or professional that may be working with the child and family.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

Who are the key personnel?

The Child Protection Lead who is available on site while the club is in session:

Comely Park: 07762 082764

Kinnaird: Carrie Craig (Practitioner): 07902 087229

St Margaret’s: Susan Nisbet (Practitioner): 07751 365335

Victoria: Kerry Winchcole (Acting Practitioner): 07923 655224

The designated senior person for Child Protection issues is:

Stephanie Taylor (Project Manager): 07762 082770

The local Child Protection team is:
Falkirk Child Protection Committee
Monday – Friday (9am-5pm): 01324 506070
All other times: 01786 470500

The local Social Work department:
Falkirk: 01324 506400

Police Scotland: 101

In an emergency always dial 999

[Child abuse and neglect:](#)

GO Kids are aware that all types of abuse can occur across the social and ethnic spectrum. This includes:

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

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

[Signs of child abuse and neglect:](#)

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. Staff must not jump to conclusions. This is not an exclusive list and many of the signs and symptoms could fall into more than one category. Also, children with additional learning difficulties often exhibit some of these signs (i.e., constant tiredness) which are not necessarily signs of abuse but symptoms of their condition.

Physical abuse: Unexplained injuries, bites, bruises or burns, particularly if they are recurrent – improbable excuses given to explain injuries – refusal to discuss the causes of injuries – untreated injuries – disclosure of punishment which appears excessive – withdrawal from physical contact/aggressive behaviour – arms and legs kept covered in hot weather (except for reasons of cultural dress) – fear of returning home – fear of medical help – self-destructive tendency – running away.

Emotional Abuse: Physical, mental, emotional or developmental lag – Domestic violence – Disclosure of punishment which appears excessive – Over-reaction to making mistakes or fear of punishment – Continual self-deprecation – Sudden speech disorders – Fear of new situations – Inappropriate responses to painful situations – Neurotic behaviours – Self-harm – Fear of parents being contacted – Extremes of passivity or aggression – Drug or solvent abuse – Running away – Compulsive stealing, scavenging.

Sexual Abuse: Sudden changes in behaviour – Displays of affection which are inappropriate – Alleged promiscuity or sexualised behaviour – Fear of undressing – Regression to younger behaviour – Inappropriate internet use and possible 'grooming' concerns – Genital itching or other genital/anal pain/injury – Distrust of familiar adult – Unexplained gifts of money, mobile

phones etc. – Depression and withdrawal – Apparent secrecy about social activities or the identity of “special friends” – Wetting or soiling – Sleep disturbances or nightmares – Chronic illness, especially throat infections and sexually transmitted disease

Neglect: Constant hunger – Poor personal hygiene – Constant tiredness – Poor state of clothing – Frequent lateness or non-attendance at setting – Untreated medical problems or unmet special needs – Low self-esteem – Neurotic behaviour – Poor social relationships – Deterioration in setting performance – Running away – Compulsive stealing or scavenging

If abuse is suspected or disclosed:

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- Stay calm; try not to transmit your own feelings which could be shock, anger or embarrassment. Remaining calm will lessen the effect of the trauma and help the child know that you are in control and can help them.
- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out.
- Listen to the child but not ask any leading questions.
- Give reassurance that the staff member will take action.
- Not promise they won't tell anyone.
- Record the incident as soon as possible.
- Ensure strict confidentiality procedures are adhered to.
- Log a concern using the below process.

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the matter straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact the Falkirk Child Protection Committee directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that the club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Logging a concern:

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about abuse will be recorded immediately, on the same working day, to the designated person. The record should include:

- Date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern.
- Date and time at which the record was made.
- Name and date of birth of the child involved.
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words.
- What is being done with the information.
- Reports of contact with other professionals or further discussions with the child / parents.
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.
- All records will be stored in a confidential file with management.
- The parent / carer will always be consulted about any issues regarding their child unless it is believed that this may cause harm to the child.
- Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than the nominated names above.
- Confidentiality over any matter regarding child protection is essential.
- Staff members may be required to be involved in further investigation by GO Kids or other professionals such as SSSC, Falkirk Child Protection, Care Inspectorate etc. This may include attending hearings, providing witness statements, documents or other information. (SSSC Code 3.7).
- Staff members may be required to be involved with TAC (Teams Around the Child) meetings. This includes professionals such as school staff, social work and CALMHS.
- The “Child Monitoring Form” is to be used as means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of abuse / harm. Staff to complete as and when necessary.

If a child discloses information staff will consider the following questions:

- Is the child in immediate danger? If yes, you should call the police as they can take the child to a place of safety.

- Does the child need medical treatment? If so, they may need to go to a GP or A & E department.
- Are the parents able to protect the child and meet all their needs? If not, then you should contact the Falkirk Child Protection Committee / Social Work department to assess the situation and put support systems in place for the child.

The record will be given to the Project Manager who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

If any member of staff thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Falkirk Child Protection Committee directly.

The role of the designated person:

- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children, or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.
- The Project Manager should make referral to the Falkirk Child Protection Committee or to the Police without delay if it is agreed during the consultation or if there is an immediate risk to the child.
- A telephone referral should be made and confirmed in writing within 48 hours.
- Any referrals that are emailed should be followed up by a telephone call to confirm receipt.
- The Project Manager will then consider the next course of action, record their decision in writing and notify those involved.

Allegations against staff:

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded in detail. Any witnesses to the incident will also record factual details of what was witnessed.
- The allegation must be reported to the Falkirk Child Protection Committee and the Care Inspectorate. Where necessary, the SSSC will also be informed.
- It may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending a full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate, the club will make a referral to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme.

Staff awareness and training:

GO Kids promotes awareness of child abuse and harm through staff training. The club ensures that:

- All staff members will be trained in Safeguarding of children. Face to face sessions with Falkirk Council will take place every 3 years and online refreshers annually.
- Safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff.
- All new staff are trained within 4 months of starting employment.
- All staff have a copy of this safeguarding policy, understand its content and are vigilant to signs of abuse and neglect.
- All staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about harm.

Use of mobile phones and cameras:

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parent's permission. Only the club camera will be used to take photographs of children at the club, except with the express permission of the manager. Neither staff nor children nor visitors may use their mobile phones or devices to take photographs at the club.

Supporting children:

GO Kids recognise that a child who is abused or witness's violence and/or abuse may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that a child in these

circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated. We recognise that a child may feel self-blame.

We recognise that the setting may provide the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

GO Kids will support all children through:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe, and positive environment within the setting, giving children a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring children know there are adults in the setting whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the setting by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the child's new setting or school.
- Remaining with them where necessary throughout any formal interview.
- Providing a range of information to children through activities/discussions based on subjects such as bullying and cyber security.
- SSSC Codes of Practice posters will be displayed around the club with staff pictures.
- Ensuring anyone collecting the child are a named/consented pick up.

Supporting staff:

We recognise that staff working in GO Kids who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to discuss the situation with the Project Manager and to seek further support as appropriate.

Safer recruitment:

GO Kids will practice Safe Recruitment by ensuring all staff are members of the PVG scheme (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) for regulation work with Children. This application process is started once staff have received a job offer. Management will help with the process; however, it is the responsibility of the employee to make payment if this is a new scheme record. Where a candidate already has a PVG scheme record in relation to children, GO Kids must carry out a scheme record update to check for any new vetting information that may be relevant. In addition, GO Kids seek further checks including 2 employment references and a GP health reference. Employment will not commence until all checks have returned satisfactory.

The PVG scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland which, as an executive agency of the Scottish Government, takes on additional responsibilities. This includes taking decisions, on behalf of Scottish Ministers, about who should be barred from working with vulnerable groups. This helps to ensure those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.

GO Kids will seek an update on existing staff PVG's every 3 years from certificate date. This process will begin once the current COVID pandemic has started to relax as to not overrule disclosure services.

Whistleblowing:

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff must be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist,

about the attitude or actions of colleagues. Further information is available in our separate Whistleblowing policy.

Physical intervention:

GO Kids policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in a separate policy (Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy) and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures. Staff need to be aware that if a child sustains an injury because of physical intervention Child Protection processes must be adhered to.

GO Kids have a strong commitment to work with all relevant partner agencies to maximise children and young people's full potential. We will work together to protect them from all forms of abuse and harm. We will ensure that Safeguarding is high priority at all levels across our organisation. We believe that all children should be:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

Further information regarding safeguarding children for families living in Scotland can be found at:

- <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/social-care/protecting-from-harm/child-protection/docs/Taking%20care%20of%20children%20-%20Information%20for%20families%20in%20Scotland.pdf?v=202004271445>
- <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/social-care/protecting-from-harm/child-protection/>

Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

/ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175>

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/>

Falkirk Council: <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/social-care/protecting-from-harm/child-protection/>

Care Inspectorate: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/national-policy-and-legislation/policies/child-protection/>

SSSC Codes of Practice: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/the-scottish-social-services-council/sssc-codes-of-practice/>