

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of BASK	Date for next review
13 July 2021	Andy McEwing	July 2024

## BASK Child Protection Policy

At **BASK** we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, helped to thrive and be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

We have a named person within BASK who co-ordinates child protection and welfare issues. The designated person undertakes specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

The named person regarding child protection at BASK is: **Carmen Dow**.

### Legal framework and guidance

- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014
- The Early Years Framework
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Children's Charter.

### Policy intention

To promote children's welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Always listen to children.

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development. Child protection is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with the other BASK policies and procedures.

BASK is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Our childcare practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff may often be the first people to identify that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and

responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work with other agencies, including as part of a multi-agency team where needed, in the best interests of the child.

### **BASK aims to:**

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of BASK staff
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure staff are trained to understand the child protection policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse, understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection issues and procedures including the local Child Protection Committee's guidelines
- Ensure parents are fully aware of child protection policies and procedures when they register with BASK and are kept informed of all updates when they occur
- Make any referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the local Child Protection Committee's guidelines
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Child Protection Board.

We will support children by offering reassurance, comfort and sensitive interactions. We will offer diverse activities according to individual circumstances to enable children to develop confidence and self-esteem within their peer group.

### **Contact telephone numbers**

- Care Inspectorate 0345 600 9527
- Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) 0345 60 30 891
- Child Protection Team **01475 715365**
- Local authority social services **01475 715365**
- Non-emergency police 101.

### **What is child abuse and neglect ?**

Several categories of abuse are officially defined in government documents. These are the most common:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** where children's bodies are hurt or injured, by omission or commission.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats and taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE:** where adults will abuse their power over children and young people to satisfy sexual desires; other children can be such abusers.

- **NEGLECT:** where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children and protect them from risk.

### **Indicators of risk**

The following circumstances are considered to be indicators that a child may be at increased risk of harm within their families BUT there may be other reasonable explanations:

- Domestic abuse
- Parental problematic alcohol and drug misuse
- Non-engaging families
- Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems
- Children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviour
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Honour based violence and forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Sudden unexpected death in infants and children

Further detailed information on all of the above circumstances can be found within Part 4 of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (page 113). This can be accessed online at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland/>

The above guidance also provides information about ways in which children and young people can come to harm outside of the home and in specific circumstances e.g.

- Child trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Online and mobile phone safety
- Radicalisation

Further detailed information on these and other specific circumstances can also be found within Part 4 of the National Guidance (Page 139).

### **WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?**

- An abuser is most often someone known to the child.
- Often, the abuser may be an adult who holds a position of authority over children.
- They can be people of any background.
- There is no certain way of identifying a would-be abuser.
- Abusers are themselves people in desperate need and who require help. The initial primary concern, however, must be for the safety of the child.

## **Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure (supported by BASK manager). This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Exact words spoken by the child
- Exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Exact observation of any incident including any other witnesses
- Name of the person to whom any concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with parent.

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the manager or supervisor, dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. It is important to remember this because any subsequent investigation by the relevant authorities must not be compromised by staff putting words in the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure, details must be logged accurately.

It may be necessary to raise the concern with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have concerns about with regard to a child. BASK expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Child Protection Team and the Care Inspectorate in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

Staff must not comment either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's alleged or actual behaviour.

## **Physical abuse**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been physical harm or injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face. Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the BASK manager or room leader.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds, drowning or suffocation. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged and discussed with the BASK manager.

## **Female genital mutilation**

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities across the

UK, including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. For those nurseries caring for older children in their out of school facility this may be an area of abuse you could come across. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as psychological concerns. If you have concerns about a child in this area, you should contact the children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse.

### **Fabricated or induced illness**

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented as having an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.

### **Procedure:**

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child when they come into BASK or that occur during time at BASK, will be recorded as soon as they are noticed by a staff member
- The incident will be discussed with the parent at the earliest opportunity
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there are any queries regarding the injury, it will be immediately reported to BASK manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the local authority Child Protection Team.

### **Sexual abuse**

Action needs to be taken under this heading if the staff member has witnessed occasions where a child has indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language.

This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role-play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. if staff assistance is required when changing after vomiting, wetting or soiling..

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing, the procedure below will be followed.

**Procedure:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be immediately reported to BASK manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Emotional abuse**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill-treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations on children or causing them to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Emotional abuse may also be imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them or becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

**Procedure:**

- The concern should be discussed with BASK manager/registered person/person designated with the lead in child protection
- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to BASK manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Neglect**

Action should be taken under this heading if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at BASK unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), or a child having an illness that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at BASK. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

**Procedure:**

- The concern will be discussed with the parent
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to such records
- If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, it will be immediately reported to BASK manager or person designated with the lead in child protection who will immediately refer the matter to the Child Protection Team in the local authority.

**Staffing and volunteering**

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. BASK will therefore not allow an adult who has not received their Disclosure Scotland clearance check to be left alone with a child.

We ask all new staff to register with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

All staff will attend child protection training within their first six months of employment and receive initial basic training during their first week. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children in BASK.

**Informing parents**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Child Protection Team/police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

**Confidentiality**

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Child Protection Team.

**Support to families**

- BASK takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within BASK
- BASK continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child

- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Child Protection Team, with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

### **Safe Recruitment of Staff**

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within BASK are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- All Disclosure Scotland checks will be updated on a regular basis to ensure the suitability of the adults caring for the children. We ask all staff requiring updated checks to join the PVG scheme
- We abide by the Care Inspectorate requirements regarding references and suitability checks for staff and volunteers to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at BASK or has access to the children
- We ensure we receive at least two written references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- All students will be requested to join the PVG scheme
- Volunteers, including students, do not work unsupervised
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007 requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to BASK and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into BASK so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- All visitors/contractors will still be accompanied whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to and comply with the whistle blowing policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner
- All staff will attend regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss child protection training and any needs for further support
- The deployment of staff within BASK allows for constant supervision and support. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door will be left ajar or other safeguards will be put into action to ensure the safety of the child and the adult.

### **Employees, students or volunteers of BASK or any other person living or working on BASK premises**



If an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer, regardless of whether the allegation relates to BASK premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The incident will be dealt with by the manager/registered person with support from the Child Protection Team:

- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals to determine how this will be handled
- BASK reserves the right to, and will normally, suspend, without prejudice, any member of staff during such an investigation
- All investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with professional support and advice
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated
- Substantiated allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation and will usually result in the termination of employment. The Care Inspectorate will be notified immediately of such a decision
- Counselling will be available for any member of BASK who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in BASK and the parents.

BASK has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the BASK manager/proprietor at the earliest opportunity.