

Missing Child Policy



South Park School and Nursery 2023

UNCRC Article 24: "Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy".

South Park School and Nursery aim to create a place of safety where children want to be and where they can develop a sense of wonder about the world. We recognise children require a balance of independence, risk, new experiences, familiar routines, support and connections. When we meet these needs, children will play and learn because they feel safe and secure. We strive to provide an experience which gives children the strongest start in life, ensuring each individual child receives the correct amount of support and tailored experiences. We can then enable children to leave secure and flourishing futures. We recognise that children need variety of support from practitioners and their environment to realise this. The Care Inspectorate state that nursery environments should be fun, challenging, stimulating and a place where children feel loved and respected, but importantly an environment that is safe and children feel protected. (Care Inspectorate, Keeping Children Safe, 2020)

Policy Aims and principles

This policy explains how we ensure children are and feel safe and secure and build strong relationships with our children and families to gain knowledge of individual children's needs. This knowledge, in conjunction with skilled practitioners, who are willing to reflect, evaluate and improve practice are key to children's safety and wellbeing.

We follow a range of national policy and guidance which combined ensures practitioners are providing a safe space for children to have fun, explore, create, learn, thrive and develop.

Children require support within their wellbeing (including self, social and emotional wellbeing, and effective communication). We must ensure time, space and encouragement for movement and co-ordination is given and help build confidence, creativity and curiosity from the interactions we have, the experiences we enjoy, and the spaces we provide.

(Realising the Ambition, 2020)

The Health and Social Care standards (HSCS) we adhere to are taken into consideration by the Care Inspectorate (the governing body for Early Years Settings), Healthcare improvement Scotland and other scrutiny bodies. These standards apply to everyone, regardless of age or ability. We are all entitled to high quality care and support. The Health and Social Care Standards have the following 5 key principles.

1. Dignity and respect
2. Compassion
3. Be Included
4. Responsive Care and Support

5. Wellbeing

These are set out by statements which set out the standard of care a person should expect.

underpinned by 5 key principles.

- I experience high quality care that is right for me
- I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support
- I have the confidence in the people who support and care for me
- I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support
- I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

HSCS 3.15

My needs are met by the right number of people.

HSCS 3.16

People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me

Using the guidance in practice

At South Park Nursery we follow guidance provided and updated by the Care Inspectorate (2018) to ensure we are, as a team and setting able to provide quality support when required. We ask all parents to sign each child in on arrival and out when leaving so we are always aware of the number of children present in nursery. Head counts are regular and more so when out and about.

The correct and following adult to child ratios are adhered to at Fraserburgh South Park Nursery, however if there are higher needs we ensure more staff are present or accessible in order to support.

Age range	Ratio
0 to under 2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2 to under 3 years	1 adult to 5 children
3 to under 8 years	1 adult to 8 children

We also ensure that two adults are always present in the premises irrespective of the number of children. This ensures support is available if necessary. For example, if a child needs help one member is available for other children.

If a staff member is working on their own (during small group work or support and intervention groups), as providers we ensure systems are in place to enable them to access support if required.

HSCS 1.8 If I experience care and support in a group, the overall size and composition of that group is right for me."

Key question 1: How good is our care, play and learning?	Key question 2: How good is our setting?	Key question 3: How good is our leadership?	Key question 4: How good is our staff team?
<p>1.1 Nurturing care and support</p> <p>1.2 Children are safe and protected</p> <p>1.3 Play and learning</p> <p>1.4 Family engagement</p> <p>1.5 Effective transitions</p>	<p>2.1 Quality of the setting for care, play and learning</p> <p>2.2 Children experience high quality facilities</p>	<p>3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well</p> <p>3.2 Leadership of play and learning</p> <p>3.3 Leadership and management of staff and resources</p>	<p>4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values</p> <p>4.2 Staff recruitment*</p> <p>4.3 Staff deployment *</p> <p>*4.2 & 4.3 do not apply to childminders who do not work with assistants</p>
<p>Key question 5: What is our overall capacity for improvement?</p>			

The Early Learning and Childcare Quality Framework, updated in February 2022 enables South Park Nursery staff to self-evaluate and reflect on practice within our setting. This new approach sets out the elements that will help us answer key questions about the impact care and learning is making to children. This document is used in South Park Nursery to evaluate the key areas found above.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that children are safe, secure, and protected from harm. The Care Inspectorate's scrutiny work has highlighted that children's safety is at greater risk when outings, transitions and children's natural curiosity and exploration are not fully understood and supported by staff. (see Outings and Excursions Policy)

To ensure we have the knowledge we update ourselves with our roles and responsibilities, assessing the environment and consider how we communicate with each other on trips and outings. We also consider our methods for family engagement, and we know and understand each individual child and how they can empower them to keep themselves safe.

HSCS 2.25 I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions.

Procedure

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, we follow the procedure below.

The person in charge will inform the Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner immediately.

- They will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- Staff will be consulted to establish where and when the child was last seen and record this.
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.

If a child goes missing from an outing staff will:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff will gather all the children together and ask them to stand with their allocated adult and carry out a headcount to ensure that no-one else is missing.
- All available staff will begin searching the area for the missing child.
- The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner will be informed immediately and where possible they will make their way to the venue to help search for the child and support staff.
- The police will be informed by the Lead person at the outing and the child reported missing.
- The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner will contact the parents and inform them of what has happened.
- Where possible the other children will be taken back to Nursery.
- If in an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and the Lead Practitioner will contact the police if the child is not found.

During the investigation staff must:

- Keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner should take statements from staff and parents to establish where the child was last seen.
- The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner must make a record containing:
 - The date and time of the incident
 - Names of adults and children on the outing
 - When the child was last seen
 - What has taken place since the child went missing
 - The estimated time the child went missing
- Establish how the breach of security happened.
- If the police are involved all staff must co-operate fully.
- Involve Social Services where there may be a child protection issue.
- Report the incident under RIDDOR arrangements and record in an incident book
- Inform Care Inspectorate (within 24 hours)
- The Insurance provider must be informed.

The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner should manage parents by:

- Contacting parents immediately
- Clarify a main point of contact regarding incident - either the Head Teacher or the Early Years Senior Practitioner
- Ensure open and honest conversation regarding the incident
- Consider follow-up meetings and conversations where required

- Ensure written communication with parents, for instance letter of apology and updates on the record of actions being taken

The Head Teacher/Senior Practitioner should manage staff by:

- Keeping everybody calm.
- Support staff as they will be very anxious and will be blaming themselves.
- Staff may be the target of parental anger and feel anxious or afraid. Staff under investigation must be treated fairly and receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- Parents may be angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff or other parents. When dealing with parents there should be two members of staff present and any acts of violence or threats against staff should not be tolerated and the police should be called.
- Children in the party will be worried. Staff must not discuss the incident in front of them but should answer their questions honestly and keep reassuring them.
- Staff may need to be offered counselling and support depending upon the severity of the incident.
- Staff must not discuss the incident with the press without taking advice.

HSCS 3.23 If I go missing, people take urgent action, including looking for me and liaising with the police, other agencies and people who are important to me.

HSCS 4.4 I receive an apology if things go wrong with my care and support or my human rights are not respected, and the organisation takes responsibility for its actions.

Staff Training

HSCS 3.14 I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, can reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.

At South Park Nursery staff are trained in Paediatric Emergency First Aid at work and ensure this is up to date and renewed when necessary.

Some staff also have Benefit Risk Assessment training to ensure the benefits outweigh the risks for all activities and outings. We also ensure our risk assessments are updated on an annual basis or when required.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and in response to accident, incident or change in national or local policy or guidance.

Review date	Amendments and Author	Author	Next Review Date
January 2023	Addition of guidance, staff training and reference to policy. Appendixes added.	Vanessa Stephen	January 2024 or as necessary

Appendix 1

Guidance

For more information on the guidance used in this policy please see the links below...

The Scottish Government, 2020, Realising the Ambition
[realisingtheambition.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

The Scottish Government, 2017, "Health and Social Care Standards My Support My Life"
<http://www.newcarestandards.scot/>

Care Inspectorate, 2018, "Guidance on Adult to Child Ratios in Early Learning and Childcare Settings"
<http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/4334/Guidance%20on%20adult%20to%20child%20ratios%20in%20early%20learning%20and%20childcare%20settings.pdf> -

Care Inspectorate, 2022, "A Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare"
<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/6578/QF%20ELC%2013092022.pdf>

Education Scotland, 2016 "How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare"
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHe ditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf

Care Inspectorate, [Keeping Children Safe - Practice Notes | Care Inspectorate Hub](#)

Care Inspectorate, [elc-practice-note-trips-and-outings.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Care Inspectorate, [elc-practice-note-3-supporting-curiosity-and-exploration.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Care Inspectorate, [elc-practice-note-2-transitions.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Care Inspectorate, 2018, "Out to Play - Practical Guidance for creating outdoor play experiences in early learning and childcare"
[Out to Play: Practical guidance for creating outdoor play experiences in early learning and childcare \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Care Inspectorate, 2016, "My world outdoors - Sharing good practice in how early years services can provide play and learning wholly or partially outdoors" [my-world-outdoors-sharing-good-practice-in-how-early-years-services-can.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

Aberdeenshire Policy/ Guidance:

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Offsite Excursion Procedures – Education and Children's Services"

[offsite-excursion-procedures-25april2021-1.pdf \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](https://lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk/offsite-excursion-procedures-25april2021-1.pdf)

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Planning, Managing and Evaluating Your Excursion Flowchart"

<https://lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk/media/6707/excursions-flow-chart-23march2021.pdf>

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, Specific documents of interest from the Offsite Excursions Procedures

[Appendices - Live, Life Aberdeenshire \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](https://lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk/appendices-live-life-aberdeenshire)

Appendix 2 - Summary For Staff Use

Procedure for reporting incident to:

- Police
- Manager/EYSP/DHT
- Aberdeenshire Early Years Team (As soon as possible)
- Care Inspectorate (within 24 hours)
- Aberdeenshire Council (Accident/Incident report submitted via ASK HR)
- Primary QIO
- Head of Service
- Aberdeenshire Council Corporate Communication Teams.

Procedure for contacting and supporting parents/carers:

- Contact parents immediately
- Clarify main point of contact regarding incident
- Consider follow-up meetings/conversations
- Written communication with parents, for instance letter of apology, record of actions taken

Procedure for recording incident:

- Accident and Incident Book.

Reference to other related policies and procedures:

- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Emergency Evacuation
- Excursions
- Complaints
- Duty of Candour

Risk Assessments to be checked and updated as required:

- Nursery Building RA
- Outdoor Learning RA
- Outdoor/Garden Checklist
- Excursions
- Visits in the Community

Appendix 3

Excursions:

- Trip details should be entered onto EVOLVE online risk assessment programme.
https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=aberdeenshirecouncil-excursions.org.uk
- Guidance from Aberdeenshire Council on excursions
- A written risk assessment must be completed prior to each event or series of events.
- Appropriate consent should be given by parent/legal guardian
- Relevant information left at setting or designated contact for details of trip.
- Emergency procedures

Appendix 4

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Offsite Excursion Procedures – Education and Children's Services"
[offsite-excursion-procedures-25april2021-1.pdf \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 5

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Planning, Managing and Evaluating Your Excursion Flowchart"
[PowerPoint Presentation \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 6

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Specific documents of interest from the Offsite Excursions Procedures"
[Appendices - Live, Life Aberdeenshire \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 7

Care Inspectorate, Keeping Children Safe - Practice Notes | Care Inspectorate Hub
Care Inspectorate, elc-practice-note-trips-and-outings.pdf (careinspectorate.com)
Care Inspectorate, elc-practice-note-3-supporting-curiosity-and-exploration.pdf (careinspectorate.com)
Care Inspectorate, elc-practice-note-2-transitions.pdf (careinspectorate.com)

Appendix 8

EVOLVE Online Risk Assessment Programme
https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=aberdeenshirecouncil-excursions.org.uk

Appendix 9

Aberdeenshire Council, 2021, "Risk Assessments"
[Risk Assessments - Live, Life Aberdeenshire \(lifelifeaberdeenshire.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 10

The Serious Incident Review guidance with appendixes to submit a notification and review can be found here: [https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2308/Serious_Incident_Reviews_Guidance_May_2017_\(1\).pdf](https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2308/Serious_Incident_Reviews_Guidance_May_2017_(1).pdf)