

Auchinairn Early Years Centre



Safe and Respectful Environment Policy

Purpose

In Auchinairn EYC, safe and respectful environment is about understanding, supporting and teaching.

We recognise that every child is unique, shaped by their experiences, and we are committed to helping all children develop the skills they need to build kind, respectful and positive relationships for life.

We are committed to creating a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where all children feel valued, respected and secure.

We recognise that children aged 2–5 are at different stages of development and are learning how to form relationships, understand emotions, and follow social expectations. Our role is to support, guide and scaffold this learning.

Policy Statement

In line with Getting it Right for Every Child and expectations from Care Inspectorate, we:

- Promote kindness, inclusion and respect
- Support children to build positive relationships
- Respond early to behaviours that may cause harm or distress
- Recognise and respond to individual needs and experiences
- Work in partnership with families and other professionals
- Take all concerns seriously

In Auchinairn EYC we do not label young children as “bullies.” Instead, we focus on understanding behaviour, supporting development, and teaching positive alternatives.

Understanding Behaviour in Early Years

Children in early years are:

- Learning how to play and make friendships
- Developing language and communication
- Learning to regulate emotions
- Understanding boundaries and social rules

Research, including Anti-Bullying Alliance, highlights that sustained bullying behaviour is uncommon in children under 5.

Behaviours such as grabbing, pushing or excluding are often part of development and require support, not punishment.

Our Values

This policy is underpinned by:

- Children's rights and voice
- Nurturing, responsive care
- Inclusion and equity
- Trauma-informed practice
- Respectful relationships
- Early intervention and support

Understanding the Child – “The Invisible Backpack”

We recognise that every child comes to us with their own life experiences.

All children arrive with an “invisible emotional backpack.”

Some backpacks are light, and some are heavier depending on a child's experiences.

We believe that all children's behaviour is a form of communication, shaped by their development and experiences.

As caring adults, our role is to:

- Support children to understand their feelings
- Help them develop strategies to manage emotions
- Gently “unpack” the challenges they carry
- Build resilience, confidence and security

Inclusion, ASN & Care Experienced Children

We recognise:

- Children with Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- Children who are care experienced
- Children with differing life experiences

We acknowledge that children will have different levels of understanding and will learn social expectations at their own pace, they may require additional understanding, flexibility and support.

Staff will:

- Adapt approaches to meet individual needs
- Use personalised strategies and plans
- Work with external professionals where appropriate
- Ensure all children feel included, respected and supported

Our Friendship Code

We promote consistent, positive language:

- Kind hands
- Kind words
- Walking feet
- Sharing and turn-taking
- Helping our friends

This language is used consistently by all staff to support understanding.

Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

We provide supportive environments for regulation:

- Quiet / calm spaces
- Nurture room
- Time with a trusted adult

Children are supported to:

- Recognise feelings
- Calm and regulate
- Return to play when ready

Keyworker System

Each child has a Keyworker who:

- Builds secure, trusting relationships
- Supports emotional wellbeing
- Provides consistency for children
- Acts as a main contact for families

This system supports early identification of concerns and strong partnerships.

GIRFEC Wellbeing Buddies

We help children understand their rights, feelings and how to treat others through the use of child-friendly characters and language to support understanding:

- Safe Stella
- Healthy Henry
- Achieving Andrew
- Nurtured Nora
- Active Amir
- Responsible Robbie
- Respected Rhiya
- Included Isabella

Responding to Concerns

All concerns are taken seriously.

Staff will:

- Respond calmly and sensitively
- Support all children involved
- Use consistent language and guidance
- Observe and gather information
- Record concerns appropriately

The Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) will:

- Review concerns
- Identify patterns or emerging needs
- Decide on appropriate actions

Where appropriate:

- Observations of children's play will be undertaken
- Individual strategies or plans will be implemented
- External advice may be sought

Confidentiality

We respect the privacy of children and families.

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis
- Records are stored securely
- Sensitive information is handled professionally

However, where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, information will be shared in line with safeguarding procedures.

Partnership with Families & Professionals

We work closely with families to:

- Share information openly and respectfully
- Provide reassurance and support
- Develop consistent approaches
- Where appropriate, we also work with:
 - Health professionals
 - Education staff
 - Social work and other agencies

This ensures children receive the right support at the right time.

Children's Voice

We listen to children and value their views.

Examples of children's voices:

- "My friend and teacher helps me when I'm sad."
- "Kind hands means no hurting."
- "We take turns."
- "I like when someone plays with me."

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Model positive, respectful behaviour
- Support children's emotional development
- Respond consistently and fairly
- Reflect on practice
- Attend ongoing training

Recording & Monitoring

We maintain clear records of:

- Incidents and concerns
- Observations
- Patterns over time
- Actions taken

This supports early intervention and continuous improvement.

Links to Safeguarding

This policy links to:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- ASN / Inclusion Policy
- Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Legislation & Guidance

This policy is informed by:

- Getting it Right for Every Child
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021
- Care Inspectorate
- Anti-Bullying Alliance

This policy has been updated after consultation with staff and parent/carer

Signed.....

13th April 2026