



Safeguarding Policy

Designated Persons:

Lucy Welsted (Designated Senior Person)
Clara Dobladez (Safeguarding children officer)
Lucy Welsted (School Director) will oversee the implementation of this policy

Introduction

Montessori Córdoba takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The school recognizes that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

This procedures document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work. These are in keeping with relevant Spanish national procedures and reflect what the Directorate considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. Child Protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities.

These procedures are to provide a framework which ensures that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent with both stated values and structures that underpin all work with children and young people, and also Spanish local regulation.

The Aims of Child Protection are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse and of children in need.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.



Underpinning Values

Where there is a safeguarding issue, Montessori Córdoba will work in accordance with the following principles:

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by the school should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- Early intervention in providing support services is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.



Guidance on “Whether this is a Child Protection Matter

If staff have significant concerns about any child, they should make them known to one of the School’s Designated Persons for Safeguarding and Child Protection. (The school differentiates between safeguarding children who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm and those who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies. These concerns may include:

Physical Abuse

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 such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development?
- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

It is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)



- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or irresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact and may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some signs that abuse may be present.

Pupils may exhibit one or more of the following traits which might indicate that some form of abuse might be taking place.

- Behaviour changes such as fear, anxiety, depression, aggression, or withdrawal, not wanting to go home, or appearing afraid of certain individuals.
- Overly sexualized behaviour or use of explicit sexual language that's inappropriate for the child's age.
- Changes in sleeping patterns including frequent nightmares, difficulty falling asleep. Both may result in the child appearing tired or fatigued.
- Changes in school performance and attendance, such as being unable to concentrate in class or frequent absences.
- Eating habits that lead to extreme weight gain or loss.
- Visible unexplained injuries such as burns, bruises, or broken bones.
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Trouble walking or sitting.



There are three thresholds for and types of referrals that need to be considered:

- Is this a child with additional needs where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected?
- Age-appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear?
- The support of more than one agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs.

If you suspect that a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed, discuss your concerns with the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Children Officer. This person will decide on the next steps in consultation with the School Director. Appropriate action will be taken as necessary.

Is this child in need?

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- Their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
- They are disabled.

If this is a child in need, discuss the issues with the designated children officer, Head of School and parents. Obtain their consent for referral to any other appropriate agency

Is this a child protection matter?:

- Children at risk or who are suffering significant harm.
- Children suffering the effects of significant harm.
- Serious health problems.

If this is a child protection matter, this should be discussed with the designated safeguarding children officer and will need to be referred to the appropriate local safeguarding authority as soon as possible.

It is the "significant harm" threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral to any external authority or agency must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration.

Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social



development.

In order to both understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and are within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

Making Referrals

Where a child is registered at school, consultation must take place with the school's Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding who will often be the most appropriate person to initiate any referral. A written record of your concerns will be made using the School's internal recording form. The Designated Senior Person will then make the decision if a referral is needed to the appropriate authorities.

Whilst the Designated Senior Person usually holds the responsibility of making decisions about referrals, anyone can make a referral, if necessary.

It is important that children receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. It is also important to act on the early signs of abuse and neglect.

Once a concern has been raised, if the Safeguarding team has sufficient concerns this will be reported onto the Social Services in the area where the child lives. It is important for staff to be aware of and to act on early signs. Once it is reported to the local Social Services they will then investigate any concerns.

If it is not reported on, following a discussion with the Safeguarding team records are kept, and the situation will be monitored by the school. Parents may also be contacted, if necessary. We will continue to listen to the views of the child and reassess concerns when situations do not improve. The School may also obtain information from our local Social Services team on borderline cases.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation.

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others. A suggested form of words that may help when talking to children is as



follows:

“I will keep our conversation confidential and agree with you what information I can share, unless you tell me something that will affect your personal safety or that is illegal, but I will tell you if I am going to pass information on and who to.”

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognized in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, included social service departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

Spanish law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Statutory agencies have a duty to cooperate. Therefore, if the Police or Social Care/Services are conducting an investigation staff must share requested information relevant to the investigation. Legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

Talking to and Listening to Children

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

- Be accessible and receptive.
- Listen carefully and uncritically at the child’s pace.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Reassure the child that they are right to tell.
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on.
- Make a careful record of what was said.

You should NEVER:

- Take photographs or examine an injury.
- Investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions.
- Make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping “secrets”.
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action.
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror.
- Speculate or accuse anybody.
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved.
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved.
- Forget to record what you have been told.



- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person.
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

Record Keeping

Well-kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm. Copies are kept by the CPO

Records should:

- State who was present, time and date.
- Use the child's words wherever possible.
- Be factual/state exactly what was said.
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.
- Be written and signed by the recorder.

Protecting Yourself Against Allegations of Abuse

You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimize the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- Work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open.
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally.
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards.
- Must not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses.
- Must not give pupils lifts home in your cars.
- Must not arrange to meet them outside of school hours.
- Must not chat to pupils on the social websites

It is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent.

Any use of physical force or restraint against pupils will be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant physical restraint policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others, parents will be informed.

Children will not be punished by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading



treatment.

Allegations of Abuse Against a Professional

Children can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer should therefore be taken seriously.

If an allegation is received by the School Director the following should be considered: Has the individual concerned...

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations of abuse made against staff and volunteers, whether historical or contemporary, should be dealt with by the School Director (or Board of Governors in their absence). If the allegation is against the School Director then it should be dealt with by the Board of Governors. Social services agency will be contacted for advice before any school investigation takes place. This initial conversation will establish the validity of any allegation and if a formal referral is needed then contact will be made within 24 hours with the relevant local agency. If this is the case a strategy meeting will be called that the School Director/Board of Governors should attend.

The decision of the strategy meeting could be:

- Official investigation by children's social care.
- Police investigation if there is a criminal element to allegation.
- Single agency investigation completed by the school which should involve the School's Senior HR advisor.

Discussions should be recorded in writing and communication with both the individual concerned and parents of the child agreed.

The fact that a member of staff offers to resign should not prevent the allegation procedure reaching the conclusion.

Allegations of abuse from a pupil about another pupil

Where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm', this again would be referred to local agencies. In the case of pupil-on-pupil abuse all of the children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, would all be treated as "at risk".



Recruitment and Selection

We adhere to and follow all 'Safer Recruitment' Policies Practice.

Montessori Córdoba recognizes that all the vacancies in a school whether teaching or non-teaching positions, represent an opportunity for unsuitable people to seek employment to gain access to children. At all points during the recruitment and selection process those members of staff responsible for the procedures will be vigilant in the need to help deter, reject or identify people who might be unsuitable to work with children. Please consult our separate Recruitment Policy for more details.

Staff Training

All Designated Persons and the School Director should undergo child protection training regarding Safeguarding at least every two years.

All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, will be provided with induction training that includes:

1. The School's Child Protection Policy
2. The staff code of conduct/ behaviour policy
3. The identity of the designated person

Training for ALL staff will also include the procedures to avoid false allegations of inappropriate behaviour by the member of staff.

Safety

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever-developing variety of devices including PC's, laptops, mobile phones, webcams, etc. place an additional risk on our children. Please see our separate Internet Safety Policy



Pupils can engage in or be a target of bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping).

Pupil Record Transfer

Whilst there is no legal requirement to transfer information about a pupil from one school to the next it makes sense to share information. The local child protection authorities request that where a case is closed, schools should not pass on information. However, the authority would hold information from a previous case, so that if new concerns are raised then the previous case detail can be retrieved, as this would not be destroyed centrally.

Talking to Children about Child Protection Issues

Children are encouraged to talk to whoever they feel comfortable with, this may include Teacher, Assistant, Secretary, Coordinator, School Director, parents, family members or the School Counsel, for example. Children should know who the named Designated Person for Safeguarding and Child Protection is for their part of the School and should feel that School is a safe place for them.



Links with Other Policies

This procedures document should also be considered within the context of other policies and documents relating to our work with children and young people. These might include, for example, documents concerning drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, neglect and families where there are mental health concerns.

Key documents are:

- Safeguarding Children
- Internet Safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- The School's Behaviour policy
- The School's Discipline policy
- The School's First Aid policy
- The Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Missing Pupil Policy

Resources

Safeguarding is important to all members off staff.

The Montessori Córdoba Board has to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under school procedures including attending meetings, collating and writing assessments reports, and staff training.

Safeguarding awareness will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate to ensure all the pupils understand what is meant by safeguarding and how they can be safe.

Teaching children how to keep safe

Children will be taught about safeguarding, including online, through the peace curriculum and Health Studies. Children will show the children how to adjust their behaviours in order to reduce risks, including the use of electronic equipment and access to the internet. Here are some useful resources:

The UK safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk)



CEOP's Thinkuknow website (www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Appendix 1: Avoiding False Allegations of Inappropriate Behaviour:

There are two major issues here. Firstly staff must avoid actions that may be interpreted as intending to abuse the pupil. Secondly, staff must avoid being overly friendly which may give the pupil the wrong impression that the member of staff is establishing an inappropriate relationship with the pupil. New members of staff will find that they are initially more cautious in dealing with situations and experience will bring greater confidence. The advice is to err on the side of caution if you are not comfortable with a given situation.

Younger pupils are more likely to be touched by their teachers etc. than older pupils and this will influence the response to the following points. Consider the difference between a 4 year-old child who has scraped his knee on the playground and is inconsolable until the appropriate attention has been given and a twelve year old girl who has twisted her ankle. Both require physical attention, but the actions will be different.

1. Do not touch pupils inappropriately.

Members of staff must be careful about how they comfort a distressed pupil or use physical action to warn a pupil of danger or prevent an accident. This is particularly pertinent when alone with a pupil.

Be aware that pupils can misinterpret well-meant actions. Generally physical contact with pupils should be avoided unless it is necessary to prevent harm or injury to them or to others.

If it is necessary to touch a pupil in order to administer medical care it is helpful to ask the pupil if it is OK to "have a look at your arm" or to tell them exactly what you are going to do. If possible, try to ensure that there is someone else with you. This could be another pupil if there is no other adult available. With older pupils it is better to ask them to do things for themselves.

2. When dealing with a pupil alone in a room have regard to the following conditions:
Make sure that someone else knows where you are and why you are speaking to the pupil. This is important if you need to speak about a sensitive matter.

Avoid speaking to a pupil in a room with no window or where no-one else could see you if necessary.



Do not place yourself between the pupil and the door. A pupil must never feel that they are trapped in the room. They must be able to get out without having to go past you.

Do not do anything that might lead to misinterpretation of your action.

If you are at all unsure about addressing a pupil ask another member of staff to be there as well.

3. Make sure that you know what the procedures are for your section of the school with respect to going into rooms when pupils are changing. For example, young children may be changing their clothes in the bathroom after a toilet training accident

4. Do not communicate with a pupil via your mobile phone or landline. Use a school mobile phone where it is helpful to have a phone conversation.

Do not give your number to a pupil Do not send messages to a pupil Do not give your personal e-mail address to pupils

5. *If it is necessary to use your car to transport pupils make sure that parents have the exact details, have given prior permission, and that there are at least 2 adults in the car.*

6. Be careful about the language that you use.

Do not use “trendy” vocabulary or young people’s language that may give pupils the wrong impression that you are trying to be friendly with them. It is important to remain professional at all times.

7. If you feel that you have not been wise in something that you have done, tell your someone from the leadership team. If you are not comfortable with the way in which a pupil has approached you, then again tell one of the above people. There may well be nothing to worry about, but at least you will have been open and transparent about what has happened.



8. Under no circumstances should a member of staff enter into a physical relationship or one which could lead to a sexual relationship with a pupil.

9. Montessori Córdoba does not permit physical sanctions.

A useful website: www.teachernet.gov.uk search under “safe working education”. This gives very good code of conduct advice for teach



MONTESSORI CÓRDOBA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN EDUCATION PUPIL WELFARE – CHILD

PROTECTION

Appendix 1: Record of Concern about a Child’s Safety and Welfare

Pupil’s Name: _____ **Form:** _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Areas of Concern

Shared with Parent ?

Date:

Time:

Advice/ Action

Actions/ Follow Up

Member of Staff: _____

Signed: _____

Passed to Designated Senior Person – Name: _____

Date: _____

Sign, Date and time

Received _____



Montessori Córdoba
International School