

Auchinairn Early Years Centre



Trauma-Informed Practice Policy

Policy Statement

At Auchinairn Early Years Centre, we recognise that children's experiences shape how they feel, behave, communicate and learn. Some children may have experienced trauma, adversity or significant life events which can affect their development, relationships and wellbeing.

We are committed to providing a nurturing, trauma-informed environment where every child feels physically and emotionally safe, develops trusting relationships and is supported to reach their full potential.

Trauma-informed practice is not a programme or intervention. It is the way we think, respond and build relationships every day.

Our Commitment

At Auchinairn Early Years Centre, we understand that children thrive when they feel safe, connected and understood. By building nurturing relationships, responding with compassion and recognising the impact of trauma, we create an environment where every child has the opportunity to heal, develop resilience and reach their full potential.

Our Vision

We believe every child deserves adults who:

Notice.

Listen.

Understand.

Respond with empathy.

Build trusting relationships.

Believe in children's potential.

We strive to create a nursery where every child feels:

♥ Safe

♥ Valued

♥ Understood

♥ Included

Our Aims

We aim to:

Create emotionally and physically safe environments.

Build secure, trusting relationships.

Promote emotional wellbeing.

Respond to behaviour with curiosity and compassion.

Recognise the impact of trauma on learning and development.

Reduce barriers to participation.

Support families through positive partnerships.

Promote resilience, confidence and hope.

What is Trauma?

Trauma is a response to experiences that overwhelm a child's ability to cope.

Examples may include:

bereavement

domestic abuse

neglect

abuse

parental separation

substance misuse

serious illness

community violence

significant loss

inconsistent care

other adverse childhood experiences

Every child experiences events differently.

Not every difficult experience leads to trauma.

Understanding Behaviour

At Auchinairn we believe:

Behaviour is communication.

Instead of asking:

"What's wrong with this child?"

We ask:

"What has happened to this child?"

and

"What is this child trying to tell us?"

Children's behaviour often reflects unmet needs rather than deliberate choices.

Our Trauma-Informed Principles

We provide:

Safety - Children feel emotionally and physically safe.
Relationships - Warm, consistent relationships with trusted adults.
Trust - Children know adults will respond calmly and consistently.
Choice - Children are offered appropriate choices throughout the day.
Collaboration - Children and families help shape support plans.
Empowerment - We focus on children's strengths and successes.

What This Looks Like at Auchinairn

We support children through:

- nurturing relationships
- predictable routines
- visual supports
- calm environments
- responsive interactions
- communication-friendly practice
- play-based learning
- emotional coaching
- restorative conversations
- flexible approaches
- co-regulation before self-regulation

Children are never expected to manage overwhelming emotions alone.

Co-Regulation

Young children learn to regulate their emotions through supportive adults.
Practitioners will:

- remain calm
- acknowledge feelings
- offer reassurance
- help children name emotions
- support problem solving
- model regulation strategies

Only when children feel safe can they begin to self-regulate.

Our Nurture Approach

We recognise that:

- learning is understood developmentally
- the play spaces offers a safe base
- nurture is important for wellbeing
- language is a vital means of communication
- all behaviour is communication
- transitions matter

These principles underpin everyday practice.

Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

At Auchinairn we use:

Wellbeing Buddies

Lumi emotional literacy resources

SCERTS

Up, Up and Away (CIRCLE)

Nurture, Play and Grow sessions

Enhanced Learning Room support

Team Around the Child meetings

individual planning where required

These approaches help children develop confidence, resilience and emotional understanding.

Early Identification

Practitioners are encouraged to:

👁️ Notice

📝 Record

🤝 Share

👉 Support

★ Review

Small observations can help identify children who may need additional support. No practitioner sees the whole picture.

Working together helps us understand children's experiences.

Working with Families

Families are experts in their own children.

We will:

build trusting relationships

listen without judgement

celebrate strengths

communicate openly

agree support together

respect confidentiality

Families should feel welcomed, valued and supported.

Partnership Working

Where appropriate we work alongside:

Educational Psychology

Health Visitors

Speech and Language Therapy

Social Work

Family Support Services

Community Paediatric Services

Third Sector organisations

Support is coordinated around the needs of the child and family.

Staff Wellbeing

Supporting children who have experienced trauma can be emotionally demanding.

Auchinairn is committed to supporting staff through:

reflective supervision

professional dialogue

wellbeing conversations

professional learning

peer support

access to leadership guidance

Staff who feel supported are better able to support children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

Will:

promote a trauma-informed culture

provide professional learning

ensure staff wellbeing is supported

monitor practice

coordinate additional support

Leadership Team

Will:

coach practitioners

support reflective practice

lead professional discussions

coordinate multi-agency working

Practitioners

Will:

build positive relationships

respond with empathy

remain curious

promote emotional safety

recognise behaviour as communication

record and share concerns appropriately

Monitoring Impact

We evaluate our trauma-informed practice through:

Learning Visits

child wellbeing

family feedback

staff reflection

supervision

child progress

self-evaluation

Legislation and National Guidance

This policy is informed by:

Legislation

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024)
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended)
- Equality Act 2010

National Guidance

- The Promise
- National Trauma Transformation Programme (NHS Education for Scotland)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Realising the Ambition: Being Me
- Building the Ambition
- A quality improvement framework for early years
- Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach
- Curriculum for Excellence – Health and Wellbeing
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Signed..... July 2026