

Health and Safety Plan: Garden Security at Little Monkeys Cramond

Introduction

As the Health and Safety Lead and Advisor for Little Monkeys Cramond, I am responsible for advising on the safety and security of our premises. Following the recent PLG meeting, 8 October 2025, where garden security was discussed, I held a formal meeting with Grace this morning, 17 October 2025, to address these concerns and develop a comprehensive plan of action.

Background

I am well-qualified to advise on this matter, having provided guidance during two recent care inspectorate assessments. The second assessment included a comprehensive hour-long session with the inspector, which significantly deepened my understanding of current health and safety standards and how they have evolved over the past few years.

While child abduction is undeniably a vital concern, our primary focus here is on addressing child abscondment. This issue has seen a notable rise in recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, and we want to reassure staff, parents, and stakeholders that safeguarding against abscondment remains a priority.

Context and Existing Measures

The nursery grounds include a pathway through the main garden area, which must remain accessible as per the terms of the land lease agreement with the Church of Scotland. The key safety considerations relate to gate and fence security.

Currently, the two gates at either side of the garden are secured with coded combination locks, which are provided to staff and parents and are regularly changed. This represents an effective control measure, significantly reducing the risk of unauthorised access. While it has been suggested that some adults might reach over the fence to open the gate without using the combination, I am satisfied that this does not present a significant risk. The safety protocols for children are maintained at all times by staff, and the garden setting is secure being on private land far from busy pedestrian or commercial areas.

Fence Security and Future Improvements

We have also identified the need to review the fencing surrounding the garden area. Although the current fence is secure, we aim to install a more solid and uniform fence throughout the perimeter. We plan to source a purpose-built fence within the next 12 to 18 months to further enhance security. At present, there are no holes, gaps, or areas of immediate concern. Behind the main fence, there is a secondary small fence and dense woodland, which provide an additional layer of security. While there is a small risk that a child, if unsupervised for a prolonged period and determined, could attempt to abscond, such an occurrence would require multiple failures of the existing controls.

Certainly! Here's the updated version of the document with the additional point included:

Security Protocols and Inspections

To demonstrate good governance and maintain a high standard of security, the following procedures will be implemented immediately:

- The nursery manager will conduct a daily inspection of the garden each morning to ensure it is fully secure, with any issues documented and rectified promptly. This inspection will also serve to mitigate risks from vandalism, animal damage, or other external factors.
- Before children and staff use the garden, all staff members are required to carry out a visual inspection. This will include checking that the area is safe, secure, and free of any dangerous items that may have been dropped or placed there.
- If staff are in the garden with children and someone uses the gate to walk through the garden, it is the staff member or senior room member's responsibility to ensure both gates have been properly shut to prevent any unintentional opening.

Conclusion

These measures reflect our commitment to safety, combining physical security enhancements with effective procedural controls. Regular reviews, staff training, and vigilance will ensure that our environment remains safe and secure for all children and staff.



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Little Monkeys PLG Member

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