

# Child Protection & Safeguarding Guidance Material

Aberdeen City Council  
Education Staff



## Introduction

Aberdeen City Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people get the best start in life and are safe from harm. In order to achieve this, we have systems and processes to identify and address any potential risks to pupil wellbeing. We place great importance on empowering children and young people to understand their rights and know how to keep themselves safe by making informed decisions and confidently taking action.

Aberdeen Child Protection Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring agencies work together to protect children in the city. The **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)** has been agreed as our local guidance.

[National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

The **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)** outlines the collective responsibility of all services, professional bodies and agencies that provide child and or adult services to identify and actively consider potential risks to all children and young people. Every adult in Scotland has a role in ensuring all our children live safely and can achieve.

The updated guidance sets out how agencies should work together to protect children and takes a rights-based approach. There is a focus on 'early support', referred to as 'whole family support', to prevent needs from escalating and requiring compulsory measures.

Practitioners are asked to have a strong focus on:

- listening to children and giving their views due consideration
- building on strengths and resilience as well as addressing risk and vulnerabilities
- having a more collaborative approach between professionals, carers and family members
- a need to fully appreciate and address the impacts of poverty on families and communities
- appreciating the risks of our digital age
- working in partnership by listening and seeking shared understanding
- leading services by constantly reviewing data to secure further improvement

This rights-based document is heavily scaffolded by the reported needs of those who have been subject to children protection measures. Expectations from children and from parents and carers are shared in the visuals below.



The **Aberdeen City Council Child Protection, Corporate Policy and Procedure (2017)** sets out the expectations of all staff employed by the Local Authority and emphasises the responsibility of all services, both individually and collectively to work in partnership to effectively protect children and young people. As such it helps guide our working practices with Community Planning Partners.

**Aberdeen City Council's GIRFEC Operational Guidance (2019)** summarises the core components of GIRFEC and provides an outline of the processes adopted by all partners in Aberdeen city.

### **What is Safeguarding? What is Child Protection? – A Definition**

Safeguarding is a much wider concept than child protection and refers to promoting the welfare of children and young people. It encompasses protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best possible outcomes. Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

**In its simplest form safeguarding practices may be regarded as preventative, whilst child protection processes are reactive.**

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

There is a direct correlation between the child's participation in a Joint Investigative Interview (JII) and the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), notably the child's right to express their views as formulated in Article 12:

*"Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

*For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."*

### **The Promise Plan 21-24, page 15 states:**

*"Listening to and, crucially, making sense of what is heard from children and families will be embedded into all practices and processes that engage with children and families to ensure their voices are heard and they are involved in every decision that affects them. Where support is required for children and families to have their voices heard and to participate in decision making, this will be identified and provided immediately, with the support remaining for as long as it is needed. Regardless of how children and family's voices are heard, there must be a full and considered exploration of how listening, shared sense-making and shared decision-making will be embedded into practice and mechanisms to actively use what is heard, must be put in place."*

### **The purpose of this guidance material**

Our aim is to ensure that all of our children and young people are safe - reducing and preventing risk where possible - with a strong focus on early intervention and primary prevention.

To realise this aim there is a need to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers within our school/service:

- understand and can carry out their responsibilities to protect our children and young people from all forms of neglect, abuse and discrimination
- recognise a situation that presents a risk to children and young people linked to:
  - physical abuse
  - emotional abuse
  - sexual abuse

- criminal abuse
- child trafficking
- neglect
- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage
- Recognise indicators of risk as defined in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021) section 4 as:
  - poverty
  - non-engaging families
  - disabled children and parents with learning disabilities
  - children impacted by poor health, including mental health
    - poor parental health
    - children and young people experiencing mental health problems
  - suicide and self-harm
  - neglect and emotional abuse
  - domestic abuse
  - parental alcohol and drugs use
  - physical abuse, equal protection and restraint
  - severe obesity
  - child sexual abuse and exploitation
  - internet enabled sexual offending
  - harmful sexual behaviour or under-age sexual activity
  - Looked After Children
  - missing, separated or unaccompanied children
  - trafficking and child criminal exploitation
  - bullying
  - hate crime
  - female genital mutilation
  - honour-based abuse and forced marriage
  - fabricated or induced illness
  - children with premature caring responsibilities
  - sudden unexpected death in infants and children
  - non-recent abuse
- understand and implement procedures related to the reporting and recording of concerns as detailed in this National Child Protection Policy.
- ensure that all record keeping, including Child Protection concern forms and chronologies, are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018).
- ensure that Child Protection incidents are carefully considered and contribute to the Child's Assessment and Child's Plan which will regularly be reviewed in order to ensure that it meets the child/young person's needs.

This guidance material also aims to ensure that children and young people:

- are aware of their rights within UNCRC including the key principles of the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated (**Article 19**) and the right to be heard (**Article 12**)
- are aware of the Child Protection & Safeguarding procedures
- are supported in developing an understanding of the 8 Wellbeing Indicators, outlined in the GIRFEC National Practice Model, appropriate to their age and stage of development, allowing them to set a positive benchmark of wellbeing and recognise deviations from this
- are aware that information may be shared to keep them safe
- have experience of appropriate life and social skills to support them in seeking the assistance of adults/services who can help them and learn to identify potential risks to their safety and wellbeing through our delivery of the health and wellbeing curriculum

The guidance ensures that parents are aware of and understand this Child Protection & Safeguarding Guidance material.

'Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use.'

**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**

### **We will achieve these aims by:**

- reviewing this document annually to ensure it remains in line with most recent advice and guidance
- issuing all members of staff, students and volunteers with this Child Protection & Safeguarding Guidance material upon their arrival to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and of how to take action
- ensuring all partners / visitors to school, including supply staff, are aware of the school's procedure for reporting child protection and safeguarding concerns by issuing them with guidelines and the name and photograph of the Child Protection Co-ordinator and Deputised Senior Manager
- ensuring that all members of staff, students and volunteers know where to access the **Child Protection, Corporate Policy and Procedure, Aberdeen City Council (2017), National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021) and GIRFEC Operational Guidance, Aberdeen City Council (2019)**.
- ensuring that all members of staff make effective use of the GIRFEC National Practice Model as an effective means to identify vulnerabilities and risk factors at the earliest possible time
- ensuring that all new staff, volunteers and students complete the mandatory corporate [ACC Learn](#) modules 'Essential Child Protection, For All Staff Members' and 'Introduction to GIRFEC' within 1 week of their appointment. Full education specific service training should be undertaken within 12 weeks of appointment and thereafter refreshed on a yearly basis
- monitoring the impact of these procedures to inform working practices
- conveying how we keep our children safe through school/service handbooks
- raising awareness of the holistic safeguarding agenda and how it complements already well-established arrangements for keeping children safe.

**All staff through their daily interactions with children and young people must adhere to these procedures operationally and apply it where required.**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All school/service staff, students and volunteers are well placed to observe physical and emotional changes in a child that could indicate abuse or neglect or at risk of being harmed.

Whilst the statutory responsibility for investigating cases of child abuse rests with Social Work and the Police; teachers, the Named Person and other school staff are well placed to identify, monitor and report possible cases of emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Education services are an essential part of inter-agency planning and support with children and their parents, whether this is within child protection processes or as part of the co-ordinated planning within a GIRFEC approach.

It is imperative that staff are aware of the measures in place to safeguard all pupils. Information relating to the following considerations can be found in the appendix:



- care experienced young people (Looked After Children – LAC)
- anti-bullying – particular vigilance paid to protected characteristics which may result in increased vulnerability
- anti-weapon and knife crime
- PREVENT – Action to counter terrorism
- digital technology and safety online
- substance misuse
- school attendance
- positive relationships and behaviours  
(Appendix 2)

It is imperative that all staff, students and volunteers have a good understanding of the categories of concern which may indicate that a child is at risk (Appendix 3).

All staff and students will ensure they adhere fully to the codes of conduct with their professional regulatory body. This will be either the **GTCS** (General Teaching Council for Scotland) or the **SSSC** (Scottish Social Services Council).

Aberdeen City Council has explicit legislative duties in regard to the role of Corporate Parenting. Corporate Parenting places responsibility on Aberdeen City Council, and partner organisations to be alert to matters adversely affecting looked after children, care experienced young people and care leavers.

All staff working in Education and Children’s Services have responsibilities with regards to Positions of Trust as stated in the [Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#). Across Aberdeen City Council there is a culture of transparency enabling practitioners to report any concerns regarding breaches of professional conduct. This is inclusive of concerns relating to signs of grooming or abuse from adults in positions of trust. All staff have a duty to report any concerns to their Line Manager without delay; it is not their role to investigate. In accordance with [Aberdeen City Council Position of Trust Procedure \(May 2018\)](#), all claims of misconduct against staff by a child will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken.

“This non-statutory national Guidance describes responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children in Scotland. The Guidance outlines how statutory and non-government agencies should work together with parents, families and communities to prevent harm and to protect children from abuse and neglect. Everyone has a role in protecting children from harm.”

**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**

### What do staff need to know about Child Protection to be able to see the signs?

Staff, students and volunteers need to be able to recognise a situation that presents a risk to children and young people and feel confident to respond in a way that will help protect the child.

Children and young people may not necessarily disclose abuse and therefore it is important for schools to nurture a climate of positive relationships in which children feel safe and are able express concerns. Signs of concern may be physical, emotional, behavioural, educational or relational. Some concerns are visible. However, there are neglected children who are abnormally quiet and compliant and become invisible.

There is a need to look out for signs which might suggest that a child is:

- being physically, sexually or emotionally harmed, or put at risk of harm, abuse of exploitation
- having their basic needs neglected or being cared for in ways that are not appropriate to their age and stage of development
- being denied the sustained support and care necessary for them to thrive and develop normally
- being denied access to appropriate medical care and treatment
- being exposed to demands and expectations which are inappropriate to their age and stage

The better we know our young people, the better we understand if they are presenting differently. There may be one single reason why staff are concerned. Alternatively, there may be several smaller concerns which, on their own, seem not to be of significant concern but present a concerning picture when brought together. For example, a child or young person may require our intervention if they:

- have unexplained bruising or injuries in an unusual place
- appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn or scared to go home
- appear hungry, tired, unkempt or have poor hygiene
- are left unattended or unsupervised or are out too late
- seem to have too much responsibility for their age
- are speaking or acting in a sexually inappropriate way
- are misusing drugs or alcohol
- are abnormally quiet and unresponsive infants with signs of developmental delay
- show abnormally frequent and persistent aggression and frustration
- are avoidant of parents or carers
- are indiscriminate in their affections with strangers
- show an abnormally poor attention span
- lack confidence and self-esteem
- show unusual impulsivity and sharp mood swings
- show an abnormal lack of concentration, confidence and/or social skills
- lack trust in others
- are self-isolating or have difficulty sustaining friendships
- steal
- bully others
- run away
- show signs of eating disorders
- show signs of self-harm or depression

In addition, we all have a duty to raise concerns about a child or young person if the behaviour of an adult who has responsibility to care for the child or young person causes concern. The adult may:

- act in a violent way to other adults, within or out with the household
- act violently or sexually toward the child or young person, or appear to be grooming them for sex
- misuse drugs or alcohol chaotically
- be physically or verbally abusive towards the child or young person
- appear to be neglecting the child's basic needs or not taking them for medical treatment
- be exposing the child to inappropriate images, particularly on-line
- struggle to manage mental health problems.

### **What is a Named Person?**

'The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach underpins both preventative and child protection processes. This includes an identified point of contact to provide early support, advice and access to services, a shared approach to assessment and consideration of wellbeing, and a shared response to identified needs, included planning for children across services where needed. Refreshed guidance describing GIRFEC policy and practice will be published in 2022.

Scottish Government's commitment to the UNCRC is built on practical foundations in universal services. Parents need to know who they can contact when they need access to relevant support for their child's wellbeing. Within the GIRFEC approach, these foundations are carried out through the role of a named person who is able to provide a clear point of contact within universal services, if a child, young person or their parents want information, advice or help.

Local arrangements and the term used to describe this role or function may vary from area to area. However, in general, the named person or equivalent function is provided by a person known to the child and family from universal services. This is usually a health visitor from birth to school age, a head teacher or deputy during primary school years and a head teacher, deputy, pastoral care teacher or guidance teacher during secondary school years.

The family may be offered direct support from their named person, or access to relevant services offered by the NHS, local authorities and Third Sector or community groups. At times during childhood and adolescence, some children and young people will need some extra help. A named person can provide or access information, advice and support to children and young people from within their own service, and when necessary, request support from other services or agencies.'

### **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**

Child Protection is the collective responsibility of all services, professional bodies and agencies. Effective partnership between organisation and children and families is more likely if key roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood by all. Every school/service has an allocated Child Protection Co-ordinator and Deputised Child Protection Co-ordinator/s. Child Protection Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that all staff within the school are competent and confident in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing.

The Child Protection Co-ordinators will engage with appropriate training and development to ensure they can respond effectively to child protection concerns and support staff. One aspect of the role of the Co-ordinator is to oversee the timely delivery of Child Protection training, ensuring accurate records are kept of this professional learning and evaluations of training are undertaken to ensure continuous improvement.

### **Lead Professional**

'A lead professional will be responsible for ensuring the production and review of an agreed multi-agency child's plan as detailed in Part 3 of this Guidance. This should integrate information from previous plans by individual agencies as appropriate. Reports for a child's planning meeting or for a CPPM should be circulated to everyone involved, especially the child and family. Reports should be available and presented so that they are accessible to all. This includes, for example, children or parents or carers with learning disabilities.

In child protection cases, the role of a lead professional will typically be taken by the local authority social worker. Where a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Plan should be incorporated into the child's plan for as long as the risk of significant harm is deemed to last. The multi-agency group working with the child and their family will be known as the Core Group.

A lead professional will:

- ensure the child's voice and experience is heard and his/her views recorded
- work with the child and family, ensuring shared understanding about the plan and about how it is working from the perspective of child and family
- track and respond to changes in circumstances that may affect the plan
- be a point of contact for all practitioners who are delivering services to the child
- make sure that the help provided is consistent with the child's plan
- be a bridge to engagement with and support from other agencies
- offer to link the child and family with specialist advocacy when appropriate
- monitor how well the child's plan is working
- co-ordinate the provision of other help or specialist assessments as needed

A lead professional will make sure the child is supported through significant points of transition. They will ensure a planned transfer of responsibility when another practitioner becomes the lead professional, for example if the child's needs change or the family moves away.'

### **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**

Safeguarding and Child Protection are the responsibility of all. However, in most cases the Child Protection Co-ordinator will receive concerns from children, staff, students and volunteers and take action to safeguard children.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator is not available a Deputised Child Protection Co-ordinator will most often decide on and take appropriate action. When neither the Deputised nor Child Protection Co-ordinator are available the responsibility for taking action lies with the individual member of staff, student or volunteer.



Social Work contact details and the name and photograph of the Child Protection Co-ordinator and Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator/s are displayed in the ELC, classrooms, reception area and throughout the school. (All schools to use this template to ensure consistency across ACC [CP & Safeguarding Coordinator Poster.pdf](#))

### **Confidentiality**

It is essential to maintain strict confidentiality in all child protection matters. All staff, students and volunteers have a duty to pass on their concerns to the Child Protection Co-ordinator but should not discuss the concerns with anyone who is not relevant to the enquiry. Breach of confidentiality is a serious disciplinary matter and will be handled following the Council's Disciplinary Procedures. All staff, students and volunteers should be aware of their role in any child protection matter and also of the principles set out in the Data Protection Act (1998) and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) through undertaking regular training.

Sharing relevant information is an essential aspect of protecting children from harm. Where there is a child protection concern, relevant information will be shared with police and/or social work without delay, provided it is necessary, proportionate, and lawful to do so. Practitioners with child protection concerns may share relevant information to -

- clarify if there is risk of harm to a child
- clarify the level of risk of harm to a child
- safeguard a child at risk of harm
- clarify if the child is being harmed
- clarify the level of harm the child is experiencing
- protect a child who is being harmed

### **Sharing without consent**

Where there may be a child protection concern, information may be lawfully shared without the need for consent to be obtained from the individual(s) to whom the information relates. The following considerations will be helpful to support relevant, proportionate, timely, safe and effective information sharing.

- if there is evidence that a child is at risk of significant harm, relevant information can be shared with a statutory agency without delay. Consent is not required or appropriate because the information must be shared in order to protect the child. Consent should only be sought when the individual has a real choice over the matter. However, where appropriate, agreement and understanding about the sharing of information may be helpful in engaging individuals in the process
- the needs, feelings, views and wishes of the child should be taken into account and documented. They may also need additional support to understand and communicate
- information sharing decisions must be based not only upon considerations about the safety and wellbeing of the individual, but also the safety of others
- information can be shared without consent if, for example, a practitioner is unable to gain consent from the individual in time to prevent risk of harm, or if gaining consent could place a child at risk
- relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if, for example, it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or psychological harm. This must be done in a way that complies with the relevant areas of law such as data protection, human rights and confidentiality
- in all circumstances, it is important to be transparent with children and families so that they know what information is to be shared or has been shared and in what circumstances. In certain exceptional circumstances, it may not be appropriate to advise the individual that information is to be shared
- children and their families should also be aware that they can challenge whether sharing information is proportionate
- a record should be made of the reasons and considerations that informed the decision to share the information.

### **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**

If, where there is a possible child protection concern, a decision is made not to share information, consider:

- what are the reasons for deciding not to share information?
- what harm could result if this information is not shared?
- what are the possible risks for the child or young person or for others if information is not shared and how serious could those risks be?

Reasons for not sharing should be recorded.

## **Taking Action**

Action must be taken if you have a concern about a child or young person as a result of:

- a disclosure of abuse
- suspected abuse - visible signs/presentation/obviously concealing something
- expression of a concern made by a third party
- a staff member witnesses an abusive situation or coercion of some form involving another person or staff member.

## **Look and listen to the child or young person**

Do not interrogate the child/young person or enter into detailed investigations. Be particularly mindful of not asking leading questions. Carefully observe the behaviour of the child or young person.

You should respond to the child or young person without showing signs of anxiety, alarm or shock. You should enquire casually about how the injury was sustained or why the child/young person appears distressed. Do not promise confidentiality, this is misleading, instead be open and transparent about the need to share information. Do not ask the child or young person leading questions which could compromise any potential investigation. (See Appendix 4.)

This part of the process is to ensure that the young person feels safe and able to speak freely without judgement or suggestion. A young person may not be able to share information coherently at this stage. Setting the “safety” aspect of this part of the process is vital to gain the trust of the pupil at a time where they may be feeling exposed and vulnerable.

## **Record it**

Make a note of concerns by recording:

- what you have seen
- what the child/young person has disclosed (in the child/young person’s words) It is important not to paraphrase what the young person is saying, accurately record the words they use
- what concerns this has raised.

Record the context, time, date and actions taken. Use non-emotive, clear, plain English which is understandable to all. Provide as much information about your concerns and use the Child Protection form available in Appendix 5 wherever possible.

Staff, students and volunteers must not:

- carry out any sort of investigation into the allegations; that is the responsibility of the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator or person deputising
- make promises to the child/young person about what may or may not happen.

## **Report it**

If you have a concern about a child or young person, speak to the Child Protection Co-ordinator/Deputised Senior Manager immediately. You should never assume that someone else has

already reported a concern, nor should you ever share child protection concerns via email. You must speak directly with the CP Co-ordinator to ensure the information has been received.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator will listen carefully to your concern and use the Child Protection concern form to determine next steps.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator or more senior member of staff is not available, the responsibility for taking the following steps rests with the individual with the concern. In this unlikely event, the individual should contact the Joint Child Protection Team or Emergency Out of Hours Social Work for advice and support.

In the likely event the Child Protection Co-ordinator is present they will take appropriate action. If abuse is suspected, staff may refer the concerns on to Police or Social Work without first notifying parents. Discussion with the Child Protection Co-ordinator may lead to a series of actions to be taken. Consideration will be given to how parents are to be engaged if appropriate, how the outcome of any investigation will be relayed to you and how the Named Person will be informed (if the Named Person is not the Child Protection Co-ordinator). At this point further actions may include contacting the Joint Child Protection Team (08007315520), Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service (08007315520) or any agency who may have information about the child/young person or their family.

The Child Protection Coordinator should adhere to the principles of information sharing set out in the **Data Protection Act 1998** and only share information which is relevant, necessary and proportionate to the Child Protection concern raised but they should not seek consent to share if they consider the child to be at risk. This could include checking the Child Protection Register.

**If there are significant and immediate concerns about the safety of a child staff, students and volunteers should call 999 or 101 immediately.**

All discussions and actions should be noted on the Child Protection concern form with times and dates noted. This should be securely retained with a summary of relevant and proportionate information transferred into the child's chronology.

### **Deciding not to take action**

Following collaboration with the Joint Child Protection Team, Out of Hours Social Work or Police Scotland, any decision not to take further action and the reasons for this should be recorded in the child's chronology. It is important that this entry is completed with times and dates noted.

### **The Child Protection Register**

Children and young people are registered on the Child Protection Register in order to alert workers to the fact that there is sufficient professional concern about a child or young person to warrant a Multi-Agency Child Protection Plan.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator can phone to check if a child's name has been recorded on the Child Protection Register.

The Child Protection Register is held jointly on behalf of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. Child Protection Committees can be contacted on 01224 523232 or by e-mail [ask@childprotectionpartnership.org.uk](mailto:ask@childprotectionpartnership.org.uk)

### What happens next?

Reported information will be considered by the Police and Children's Social Work. This may result in a joint investigation. Colleagues in Children's Social Work and Police Scotland will advise of any support they require from the Child Protection Coordinator.

If required, an Inter-Agency Referral Discussion (IRD) will be convened.

IRD Flow chart - [IRDProcedureCOVID19-1.pdf \(aberdeengettingitright.org.uk\)](#)

IRD Record of discussion - <https://www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/IRD-minute-FINAL-Aug-2020.docx>

### Monitoring

This document will be reviewed annually. School Leadership Teams have a responsibility to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers understand what they have to do if they have a concern about a child.

Eleanor Sheppard is the Officer with the Child Protection Lead for Education Services (Tel: 01224 522707) and can be contacted for advice and guidance.

Further information on child protection and safeguarding can be found by clicking on this Thinglink.

[Child Protection & Safeguarding - ACC — ThingLink](#)

## Appendix 1 - Reporting a child concern to child protection services

Concerns about harm to a child from abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence should be reported without delay to social work or in situations where risk is immediate, to Police Scotland. Prompts below are not an assessment. They may support accuracy in an initial outline of concerns, assisting prompt, efficient response. Local reporting protocols apply.

### Name role/contact details of person reporting concern

#### Key contacts

Name of the child, age, date of birth and home address if possible  
Name/address/phone of parents/carers or guardians  
Culture/language/understanding: any considerations in communication?  
Name of child's school, nursery/ early learning centre or childcare  
Is it known if the child is on the Child Protection register?

#### Immediate needs and concerns

What is the nature of the child protection concern?  
Where is the child now?  
How is he/she now?  
Physically: does he/she have any known injuries or immediate health needs and do they require medical treatment?  
Emotionally: how is he/she right now and what does she/he need immediately for their reassurance/understanding?  
Communication and understanding; is he/she able to communicate without interpreting/without additional support for communication?  
Is the child safe now?  
If not, in your view, is there action that might be taken to make them safe?

#### Record of concerns

When did these concerns first come to light? What happened? (For example because of an injury? through what this or another child has said? because of how a child appears? or due to e.g. parental behaviour?)  
Is a person are persons are believed to be responsible for harm to a child?  
If so, is/are their name/address/occupation/relationship to the child known?  
Are you aware if this person has/these persons have access to other children? (Name, age and address details of such children if available?)  
If the concern was raised by this child then who has spoken to him/her?  
Is the person who has spoken to the child available to be spoken with?  
What has the child said to this point? (Please note and share)  
What he/she has been asked, when and by whom? (Please note and share)  
If concerns were not reported when they first arose, was there a reason for this and what has prompted reporting now?

#### Agreed actions (following this initial communication)



## Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Considerations

### Care Experienced Young People (Looked after Children – LAC)

Schools have a legal duty to consider if every Looked After Child requires a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP). The need to consider is most easily undertaken during a multi-agency meeting. If a full assessment of wellbeing shows that a child does not need additional support to benefit from school education, the decision not to put a CSP in place will be recorded and the provision of a Child's Plan will suffice.

In order to meet the criteria for a CSP, a child or young person must meet all of the following criteria:

- the education authority is responsible for the school education of the child or young person
- the child or young person has additional support needs arising from one or more complex factors or multiple factors
- those needs are likely to continue for more than a year
- those needs require significant additional support to be provided by one or more appropriate agencies as well as by the education authority.

Based on the criteria above schools should evidence that robust multi-agency discussions have taken place about whether or not a Looked After Child meets the criteria for a CSP and that there is a clear process in place for review.

### Anti-Bullying

In keeping with the school Anti-Bullying Policy all incidents of a bullying nature should be logged in SEEMiS with support afforded to both parties. A bullying incident is defined by the perception of the child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour, not the potential child or young person displaying bullying behaviour or practitioner's perception. In situations where a child or young person experiencing bullying does not want to report it due to fear of potential consequences, the responsibility lies with practitioners to do so, whilst also reducing anxieties of the child or young person experiencing bullying behaviour. Any emerging trends will inform a review of the school Anti-Bullying Policy and help inform approaches to safeguarding. Preventative and reactive response to all incidents of bullying should be in full alignment with a school's Anti-Bullying Policy which is based upon Aberdeen City Council's Anti Bullying Policy. Particular vigilance will be paid to the following:

- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- asylum seekers
- refugees
- Looked After Children
- race and ethnicity
- social and economic prejudice.

All instances of prejudice-bullying should be reported to [GREC](#).

Cyberbullying, or online bullying, can be defined as the use of technologies by an individual or by a group of people to deliberately and repeatedly upset someone else. Online harassment is a crime. The production and distribution of sexting images' involving anyone under the age of 18 is illegal and will often result in child protection arrangements being followed including a referral to Police Scotland. Advice on dealing with activities which may be considered as Sexually Harmful Behaviour can be found at: [Brook Traffic Light Tool](#) Hate crime is defined as any crime which is perceived by the person experiencing it or any other person as being motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group. Perpetrators of hate crime focus upon demonstrating malice or ill will towards individuals on the basis of their actual or presumed, sexual orientation, transgender identity, disability, race or religion. All incidents of Hate Crime should be reported to Police Scotland in person or through the [Online Reporting Form](#).

### Anti-Weapon and Knife Crime

Aberdeen City Council fully embraces the Anti-Weapon/Knife Pledge. There are key messages to safeguard children from the potential dangers of weapons embedded in the curriculum and in keeping with the [Aberdeen City Council Anti-Weapon and Knife Crime Policy \(rev. Feb 2019\)](#). Focus is given to weapon facts, law relating to weapon/knife crime, consequences of knife crime, personal safety and strategies to manage risky situations with curriculum delivery regularly reviewed to inform improvement.

## **PREVENT – Action to Counter Terrorism**

All staff in Aberdeen City Schools are fully committed to the National Prevent Strategy. They are aware of the Single Point of Contact who has responsibility for dealing with all Prevent concerns relating to the potential radicalisation of vulnerable children, young people and their families. All staff in Aberdeen City Schools should undertake Workshop to Raise Awareness of PREVENT (WRAP) training and should be aware of who the WRAP Facilitator is within their school. All staff have an appropriate awareness of signs of potential radicalisation enabling them to keep an effective watching brief on upon children and young people. Staff should make full use of WRAP training to empower children and young people to minimise risk of radicalisation. <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

## **Digital Technology and Safety Online**

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate on line material and makes use of the Safer Schools app to empower learners to stay safe online. Our IT Acceptable Use Policy establishes expected online behaviour and is understood by children, young people, parents and staff. Any breach of policy triggers a review of the school's policy and changes made as appropriate. Staff have access to professional learning to support them to understand this increasingly complex risk. We are vigilant in receiving online safety updates from Central Officers and acting upon these appropriately.

### **Substance Misuse**

All staff meet their responsibilities in relation to substance misuse through fully adhering to [Aberdeen City Council Policy and Procedure for Managing Substance Misuse Incidents Involving Children and Young People in Schools \(rev. 2019\)](#). All incidents are recorded and reported informing safeguarding arrangements and policy review. This allows for appropriate, timely and proportionate support for children involved in a substance misuse incident, in full alignment with Local Authority procedure.

## **School Attendance**

Children who are Missing from Education (CME) are a particularly vulnerable group and we adhere to [Aberdeen City Council Children Missing from Education \(CME\) Policy \(Aug 2017\)](#). Analysis of cases will inform local safeguarding arrangements and Local Authority Policy revision.

[ACC Guidance on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance](#) outlines procedures to support good school attendance. Careful monitoring of attendance enables us to identify and address any truancy before a pattern becomes established. We recognise that children and young people are at greater risk when not in school and have arrangements in place to monitor attendance, lateness or children and young people who do not remain on school premises after initial registration. Secondary school staff monitor the attendance of young people throughout the course of the school day through the use of period-by-period registration on SEEMiS. All subject teachers are required to complete online registration every period to enable an early alert to be created for a young person whose status changes from present to absent during the course of the day. Primary school staff will monitor attendance of all children throughout the course of the school day, in the morning, after break and after lunch time to enable an early alert to be created for a child whose status changes from present to absent during these busy periods of transition.

## **Positive Relationships and Behaviour**

ACC Procedure for Injury, Accident and Near Miss Reporting ([Guidance](#)) sets out a procedure to log incidents on the corporate system. The number of incidents will be carefully tracked to inform a review of how effectively the school supports vulnerable children and young people.

The school's Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy sets out how the school promotes positive behaviour. Scrutiny of the effectiveness of the policy will support on-going monitoring of our safeguarding arrangements. Monitoring the frequency and impact of [Person-Centred Risk Assessments \(PCRAs\)](#) will enable the school to review how best to support vulnerable learners in keeping with the Local Authority [Continuum of Provision \(April 2018\)](#) and [Staged Intervention Framework](#).

Any incidents of Exclusion are managed in keeping with [ACC Supporting Learners: Minimising Exclusion Policy 2020](#) and [Minimising Exclusion Accompanying Guidance and Procedure 2020](#). Attendance and exclusion are carefully monitored so that any emerging trends can be addressed through either a review of internal systems or refinement of the universal or targeted offer to support and promote wellbeing.

## Appendix 3 - What is child abuse and child neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after. There may be some variation in family, community or cultural attitudes to parenting, for example, in relation to reasonable discipline. Cultural sensitivity must not deflect practitioners from a focus on a child's essential needs for care and protection from harm, or a focus on the need of a family for support to reduce stress and associated risk.

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 'Persistent' means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse is present to some extent in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

It may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
- exploitation or corruption of a child, or imposition of demands inappropriate for their age or stage of development
- repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation
- demands that so exceed a child's capability that they may be harmful
- extreme overprotection, such that a child is harmed by prevention of learning, exploration and social development
- seeing or hearing the abuse of another (in accordance with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018).

### National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

### Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

For those who may be victims of sexual offences aged 16-17, child protection procedures should be considered. These procedures must be applied when there is concern about the sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology. Children who are trafficked across borders or within the UK may be at particular risk of sexual abuse.

### **Criminal exploitation**

Criminal exploitation refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. Violence or the threat of violence may feature. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur through the use of technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

### **Child trafficking**

Child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation. Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders. Examples of and reasons for trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

### **Neglect**

Neglect consists in persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty and is an indicator of both support and protection needs.

'Persistent' means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm.

The GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. 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); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child's essential emotional needs.

Faltering growth refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition requires further assessment and may be associated with chronic neglect. Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

### **Female genital mutilation**

This extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault upon girls and women involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

### **Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA). HBA includes practice used to control behaviour within families, communities, or other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or 'honour'.

## Appendix 4 - Listening to the Child

The first steps when listening to a child are crucial. They often feel frightened, confused and vulnerable.

- Be receptive.
- Take it seriously – there is a reason for the child imparting such information.
- Reassure the child they are right to tell, listen carefully, and avoid showing any kind of shock reaction.
- Tell the child you need to seek help. Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Make a careful record of what was said – use the child's words not your own.
- Do not record or report opinion, only factual information.
- Don't jump to conclusions, speculate or accuse anyone.
- Don't use leading questions; this is not your role and may cause serious legal implications regarding potential prosecution.
- Inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator without delay.



## Appendix 5

### CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN FORM – PART 1

#### PART 1: To be completed by the person who has the concern.

- If a member of staff knows or suspects that a child/young person has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed, this form must be completed and the concern must be passed onto the Child Protection Co-ordinator as soon as possible and on the same working day.
- This form should be either handwritten or completed electronically.
- It should be kept in a secure place, separate from other Educational records.

#### 1. Child/Young Person's Details

Name	Date of Birth	Year group / Class
------	---------------	--------------------

#### 2. Person recording the concern

Name	Role
------	------

**3. Details of concern. (The member of staff must record the facts as accurately as possible. If suspicions arise because of something a child has said, the member of staff should record the facts using the child's own words.)**



**DOMESTIC LAW**

**Legislation defining certain offences against children**

Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, section 12  
Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005  
Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020  
Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009  
The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005  
Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015  
Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982  
Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019

**Legislation on managing adults who may pose a risk to children**

Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010  
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011  
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018  
Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001  
Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016

**Legislation on criminal proceedings and witness supports**

Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995  
Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014  
Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019  
Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021

**Additional legislation**

Children (Scotland) Act 2020  
Children (Scotland) Act 1995  
Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011  
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014  
Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020  
Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003  
Anti-social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004  
Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007  
Equality Act 2010  
The Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011  
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018  
Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965  
Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Data Protection Act 2018  
The Police (Scotland) Act 1997,  
The Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 - Schedule 1 which lists offences against children.  
Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.  
Protection of Children Act (2003) – Implications for Disclosure Scotland applications.  
Additional Support for Learning Act (2005)  
The Equality Act (2010)

**International law**

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) 1953  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989  
European General Data Protection Regulation 2018