



# CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Education and Attainment

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## **Child Protection and Safeguarding in Educational Establishments**

### **1. General Context**

The care and protection of children and young people in West Dunbartonshire is fundamental to the council's aspirations for them to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- We create a safe environment for children and young people.
- Staff are equipped with the information, knowledge, support and guidance to keep children and young people safe and protected.
- It provides the framework in which all staff working within an educational establishment, individually and collectively, can understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare and rights of children and young people.

As an organisation we are committed to ensuring:

- The welfare and rights of all children and young people are always the primary concern.
- Children and young people's rights to care and protection are protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. UNCRC Article 19 (protection from all forms of abuse or neglect).
- Every child and young person should be treated as an individual and have a right to a positive sense of identity. UNCRC Article 8 (right to preserve identity).
- Children and young people have the right to express their views on matters affecting them. UNCRC Article 12 (right to have views taken into account on all matters that affect them).
- Children get the help they need when they need it and their safety is always paramount.
- We fulfil our legislative duties related to safeguarding, including child protection.
- All staff within education are suitably trained in how to respond to child protection matters.
- In fulfilling this duty we must engage in close partnership with parents/carers and relevant agencies.

### **2. Professional Commitment**

The welfare and rights of all children, young people are always our primary concern

Protecting children, young people is everyone's responsibility; every child and young person should be treated as an individual and have a right to a positive sense of identity. UNCRC Article 8 (right to preserve identity);

All Education Services staff must:

- Share information on an inter-agency basis which is of benefit to a child's or young person's wellbeing; focus on preventative, early intervention strategies.
- Contribute to a proactive establishment ethos which seeks to minimise the risk of harm and which places listening to children and young people at the forefront.
- Respond effectively and timeously to any concerns, especially of imminent risk to a child or young person.
- Ensure they are well informed of their role and related responsibilities.

All establishments and schools should operate within a good practice framework which reflects:

- Inclusion, equality, fairness and openness.
- Clear understanding amongst all staff of the commitment to fostering the general wellbeing of all children and young people.
- The active involvement of the child or young person (and parents and carers) as appropriate when arrangements relating to their care and support are being considered.
- Strong pupil support systems which are alert and responsive to early signs of need.
- Robust internal referral systems from staff to senior management, supported by consistent recording and monitoring systems, including maintaining Latest Pastoral Notes and Chronologies.
- Regular auditing and review of children and young people's files including personal progress record (PPR), latest pastoral notes (LPN) and chronologies.

### **3. Responsibilities of Child Protection Coordinator**

Every educational establishment will have a member of the senior leadership team nominated as a Child Protection Coordinator; usually head of establishment or member of the senior leadership team (SLT). In the event that the child protection coordinator is absent a deputy should be appointed to fulfil this role. This information should be displayed in communal areas, school social media/website and school handbook.

The Child Protection Coordinator will ensure that arrangements are in place to secure the care and welfare of all children and young people, ensuring the appropriate procedures are followed in the event of concerns regarding a child or young person's general welfare or where there is an immediate safeguarding concern.

The Child Protection Coordinator will also provide direct advice and support to staff members who are involved in working with the child or young person.

The Child Protection Coordinator will also be the key link person with associated agencies and ensure that the child or young person's Seemis record is updated, ensuring associated actions are closely monitored and reviewed.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Establishment to ensure that all staff are mindful of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and should ensure all staff receive a copy of the leaflet "Child Protection Guidance and Procedures for all Members of Staff".

It is essential that all staff fully engage with statutory partners (Social Work and/or Police) in all cases related to child protection. This includes providing evidential statements and attendance at court when cases reach a criminal threshold.

### **4. Child Protection Guidance and Procedures for all Members of Staff**

The universal responsibility of all staff working with children is to protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation, to respond appropriately when abuse is identified and to ensure whenever possible that all children are able to access their right to be raised in a warm, stimulating and safe environment with the support of staff, their parents and carers.

There are however vulnerable children and young people who will require a more targeted response to their needs, which in some cases may require a coordinated response from other agencies. These heightened risks tend to fall into two categories; 1. Welfare concern and 2. Suspicion of risk

immediate harm (child protection).

Members of staff should complete a raising concern form (RCF) (Appendix 1) when alerting the child protection coordinator or head of Establishment to concerns.

It is the responsibility of the child protection coordinator / Head of Establishment to report the concern **immediately** to Social Work or Police by phone where they initially assess the risk has met a child protection threshold. Ask to speak to the duty Social Worker and explain that you are phoning regarding a Child Protection concern.

Follow up in writing with Notification of Concern form (CP2 - Child Protection concern) (Appendix 2) with a copy to your establishments link Child Protection Officer and the appropriate Health contact as detailed on the form. Note the name of any social worker/police officer that you spoke to on the CP2. Deciding which form should feature as part of the initial triage phone call. It may result on conversation and reflection with partner colleagues that the CP threshold has not in fact been met and a request for assistance (RFA) (Appendix 3) may be the appropriate route. If submitting an RFA consent is required.

Social Work Services will determine the action to be taken following a formal referral and confirm their decision and next steps on the CP2 or RFA once it has been agreed by a supervisor and team leader.

It is not the responsibility of education staff to investigate suspicions or disclosures.

Where there are concerns related to the risk of abuse or neglect, confidentiality cannot be respected. This should be carefully explained to the child or young person that the members of staff are acting in their best interest. This should be highlighted in the school hand book on Child Protection.

Where there is any concern relating to the conduct of a member of staff immediate contact must be made with the Head of Establishment.

Where a member of staff has concerns related to the conduct of the Head of Establishment, immediate contact should be made with the establishment's link Senior Education Officer and Child Protection Officer.

## 5. **Engagement with parents/carers**

Partnership with parents/carers is best practice.

Where concerns relate to ongoing welfare issues Heads of Establishment should already be collaborating with parents/carers and how best to support and advise them of their intention to request support from the most appropriate partner agency i.e. Social Work, Health, Educational Pyschologist, counselling services etc.

If concerns are about **significant risk or safety** in the home setting Heads of Establishment should make a direct referral via phone call to social work and/or police without informing the parent/carer.

Staff must also respect the views of the child or young person in relation to confidentiality, as long as the safety of the child or young person is not compromised.

Where a concern or disclosure has been made by a member of public you must remind them that anonymity cannot be guaranteed in matters of child protection.

## 6. **Rules for Information Sharing**

- Adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) May 2018.
- Share information that is necessary, relevant and proportionate.
- Record why information has been requested or shared.
- Make the child, young person or family aware of why information is being shared unless there are child protection concerns.

## 7. **Continuous Professional Development**

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure they are familiar with this policy and the supporting Professional Learning opportunities.

Child Protection Professional Learning will continue to be planned annually for engagement of all staff as well as opportunities throughout the academic year. This Professional Learning is highlighted on our Child Protection Professional Learning and Monitoring Calendar that is shared at the beginning of the school year.

Annual training for Child Protection Coordinators will take place in June in order that they can deliver the yearly training to staff. Termly forums will focus on particular priorities and auditing as required.

Heads of Establishments and Child Protection Coordinators will be routinely advised of any emerging developments via meeting with the Education Leadership Team and termly forums.

<https://westdunbartonshire.cpdservice.net/>

## 8. **Policy and legislative context**

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up so that they become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their safety is always paramount.

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) promotes action to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in eight areas. The wellbeing indicators aspire for all children and young people to be healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and, above all in this context, safe. The primary indicator for child protection is to keep children and young people safe and, in so doing, attention is given to other areas of wellbeing as appropriate.

[The Children & Young People \(Scotland\) Act](#) places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Safeguarding sits within the context of the wider Getting it right for every child ([GIRFEC](#)) [approach](#), the [Early Years Framework](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) sets out duties on a range of public bodies to

report on how they are taking forward children's rights as set out in the UNCRC. Moreover, ratified by the UK Government in 2009, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates that in order for disabled children to be able to realise the rights mentioned above, they need to have disability and age appropriate assistance.

In addition to the Convention, the [Childrens Charter](#) was drawn up following consultation with children and young people as part of the Scottish Government's child protection reform programme. The Charter sets out a list of demands children should feel entitled to make including the need to be safe.

[The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) - This guidance describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children and will support the care and protection of children

This Guidance is for all practitioners who support children and families whether they work in health, police, third sector, local authority or education settings. The approaches set out depend on a culture and ethos which recognises that whilst there are specific responsibilities associated with certain professional roles, everyone has a job in making sure children 'are alright'. The Guidance underlines the responsibilities of adult services to consider the needs of children and their parents where vulnerability and protection needs are identified.

Familiarisation with these documents is recognised both as an essential requirement and a continuous professional development activity which will assist staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as described with [GTCS](#) and [SSSC](#) Professional Standards as described within WDC guidelines and code of conduct (staff).

***Everyone has a responsibility to protect children and young people. Every child and young person, at all times, has a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice which may result in harm. Above all, the welfare of children and young people is the paramount consideration and we must all work together to ensure they are protected.***

## **Appendix**

1. Raising Concern Form (RCF)
2. Child Protection Referral Form (CP2)
3. Request for Assistance Form (RFA)
4. Child Protection Procedures and Guidance for Staff Leaflet
5. Child Protection Procedures and Guidance for parents & Carers Leaflet
6. Types of Abuse information
7. WDC Escalation and dissent guidance
8. Female Genital Mutilation
9. Fabricated Illness
10. Covid-19 response