

Park Primary School and ELCC

POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

'All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected. The welfare of children is paramount.'

Framework for Standards, Scottish Executive 2004.

Rationale:

Child protection is both a professional responsibility and a corporate duty for all staff in Argyll & Bute Community Services Park Primary School is committed to making sure that procedures are in place to ensure the care, welfare and protection of its pupils. The school promotes good relationships amongst staff and pupils and encourages pupils to show concern and understanding of others. This policy is needed to ensure that procedures are in place which support pupils and protect them from harm, abuse and neglect. It will make sure that all staff are vigilant about pupils' health and safety, are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are clear about child protection issues.

Principles:

This policy is based on the following principles:

- It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that children are protected from harm, abuse and neglect
- Children feel safe in an environment where mutual trust, respect and confidence are evident
- Schools have a particular role in safeguarding children and in educating them about risks
- Joint working with other agencies promotes good practice in supporting children and their families
- Joint working with partner agencies will facilitate the transfer of relevant information to relevant people.

Responsibilities

- The Child Protection Coordinator at Park Primary School is Miss G. Carney (Headteacher)
- The Child Protection Coordinator will ensure that
 - Legislation in respect of Child Protection is adhered to in Park Primary School (Argyll & Bute Council Standard Circular 3.23).
 - National and authority guidelines are followed by all members of staff (Framework for Standards, Scottish Executive, 2004, Supporting Children, Supporting Effective Learning: Section G: Child Protection Guidelines – updated December 2015).

- Staff have ready access to current information regarding child protection legislation, the main elements of child abuse and their role and responsibilities in protecting children (see Appendix).
- In the absence of the Coordinator her deputy will keep her informed of all child protection issues.
- All referrals are systematically logged and all related paperwork is scrupulously filed.
- All staff, including non- teaching staff, will receive an annual update regarding child protection procedures.
- Staff have access to appropriate in-service training should the school or members of staff regard this as desirable or necessary.
- Staff are given appropriate advice regarding child protection on educational excursions or visits.
- PVG checks are made on all staff appointments and adult helpers where appropriate.
- Appropriate procedures are in place when other adults are in direct contact with pupils and young people.
- Authority child protection audits are completed and returned timeously.
- All staff (teaching and non-teaching) will ensure that
 - They are aware of their professional and corporate responsibilities in relation to child protection.
 - They are aware of the Authority guidelines and where to locate them.
 - They note all child protection concerns and pass them to the child protection coordinator immediately.
 - They keep a dated note of all matters relating to their concern.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- The Child Protection Coordinator and the Senior Management Team will, within the school's established procedures, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis.

Park Primary School & ELCC
February 2016

Standard Circular No: 3.23

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES: EDUCATION**

Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon PA23 8AJ

To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

CHILD PROTECTION

1. ROLE OF THE EDUCATION SERVICE

1.1 The purpose of this circular is to emphasise the responsibility of staff in schools and other educational establishments in the matter of child abuse and to describe the procedures for dealing with it. The circular must be implemented in conjunction with the education service's Child Protection Guidelines (*revised 2002*) and the Argyll & Bute Child Protection Committee Inter-Agency Guidelines (2000). In the following paragraphs these are referred to as the Service Guidelines and the Inter-Agency Guidelines respectively.

1.2 Child abuse is described under one of five categories in the Child Protection Register which is maintained by social work. These are:-

- a) Physical injury b) Physical neglect c) Sexual abuse
- d) Emotional abuse e) Non-organic failure to thrive

For standard definitions of these categories of abuse and the criteria for placing a child's name on the Child Protection Register refer to section 3 of the Service Guidelines and section 2 of the Inter-Agency Guidelines. Although these are presented as discrete definitions, in practice a child's experience of abuse may fit into more than one category.

1.3 While it is the responsibility of the director of community services to enquire into allegations of child abuse, teachers and staff in all educational establishments do have a major responsibility to assist the social work department in identifying cases of child abuse, including sexual abuse. Attendance at case conferences to establish whether or not there has been child abuse and assisting with the monitoring of children who are on the child protection register are further responsibilities of education service staff. The police will be involved where it appears that a crime may have been committed, and staff will be expected to assist the police in making their enquiries. Evidence obtained by social workers or police will be assessed by the reporter to the children's panel with whom staff should cooperate fully.

Similarly assistance should be offered to medical authorities as required. Section 11 of the Service Guidelines gives further guidance on cooperating with other agencies.

For the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in child protection refer to section 3 of the Inter-Agency Guidelines. The roles and responsibilities of staff in the education service are outlined in the Service Guidelines in Sections 5,7,8,9,10,11,12 and 13.

- 1.4 Heads of schools and all educational establishments must discuss the contents of this circular with all members of staff at least annually. It is particularly emphasised that procedures be discussed fully with staff responsible for children least able to protect themselves, for example children in Pre 5 establishments, children in the earlier stages of the primary school and children and young people with special needs.

Child abuse can affect children of all ages regardless of background. Therefore all staff should be thoroughly familiar with the Service Guidelines.

The contents of this circular should be made known to newly appointed members of staff as they take up post, including absence cover staff and visiting teachers.

- 1.5 Where concerns arise staff should take account of the guidance given in the following sections of the Service Guidelines.
- Section 3 for information on categories of child abuse and section 4 for indicators of abuse.
 - Section 8 for action required, in response to grounds for concern. Note that the summary of action required, as detailed in section 8.2 , must be displayed prominently in staffrooms.
 - Section 9.5.7 if there are indicators of physical and emotional harm that may have been carried out by another pupil or pupils.
 - Sections 9.5.5, 9.5.6 and 8.2 if there are grounds for concern about sexual activity which may be abusive involving another pupil or pupils.
 - Section 9.5.9 if there is a complaint or suspicion that a member of staff has been involved in causing significant harm to a child.
 - Section 9.5.8 if there has been a complaint or if there is a suspicion that a child has been significantly harmed by a person unknown to the child and family.

2. THE RESPONSE OF EDUCATION SERVICE STAFF

- 2.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.3 the responsibility for enquiring into allegations of child abuse rests with the director community services. Education service staff should not conduct such enquiries but must report suspicions immediately. Sections 9.3 and 9.4 of the Service Guidelines apply.

When questioning children about any matter education staff should stop if they suspect the possibility of abuse. Inappropriate or intrusive questioning is not in the child's best interests and could contaminate a subsequent social work investigation. Staff should not agree to keep secret any information that a child might have been abused or is at risk of abuse. Sections 10.3 and 10.4 of the Service Guidelines apply.

- 2.2 Wherever there is evidence that a child has been abused or there is a suspicion of abuse, this must be reported to the head of the school or educational establishment immediately. Refer to Section 4 of the Service Guidelines for Indicators of Abuse and Section 9 for Grounds for Concern.

It is not necessary or safe for a child that a member of staff waits for proof or actively gathers evidence of abuse before reporting concerns. Proof is not required. If the member of staff suspects from the information available that there is the possibility of abuse it should be reported immediately to the head.

Staff must record what has occurred as soon as possible on the same day. The head will request this and will provide guidance as necessary. The record should be dated and signed and should be kept in the confidential Incident File.

- 2.3 The head, or the person deputising for the head, after judging that there may be grounds for suspicion, should then take the following action:

- i) Immediately advise the duty senior social worker at the local social work department area office of the circumstances.

In discussion with the duty senior social worker the following matters should be covered:

- details of the grounds for concern;
- reporting the matter to the police and/or local health authority;
- consideration of whether there are implications for siblings and other children;
- immediate support needs of child/children involved;
- how, when, and by whom parents will be informed;
- further action to be taken by the head;
- action to be taken by social work ;and
- confirmation that the referral is being taken forward under formal Child Protection Procedures.

- ii) Although the senior social worker must always be informed by the head, and in most cases the social work department should be the first point of contact, heads must consider if an emergency exists where urgent circumstances require the earliest call to be made to the police. Urgent circumstances could include, for example, the immediate avoidance of further abuse, the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, the avoidance of the destruction of evidence, and/or the need for Emergency Child Protection Measures.

- iii) If the child has sustained an injury which requires medical attention, obtain confirmation from the senior social worker as to the medical arrangements which will be made, and cooperate as necessary with the school medical officer or school nurse or with arrangements to take the child to hospital or to his/her own GP.

- iv) Should the head decide that the child's condition is a medical emergency then first aid and urgent removal to hospital become first

priority immediately followed by notifying the social work department and the police. In such cases, the child should be accompanied to hospital by an appropriate member of staff and the circumstances explained to the casualty officer. Refer to Section 9.5.1 of the Service Guidelines.

- v) On the same day send a report of the incident to the area reporter to the children's panel and a copy of the report to the
- director of community services
 - the educational psychologist
 - the medical officer with responsibility for the school
 - the social work area manager at the local social work area office

This report should include the name of the social worker who received the referral at 2.3 (i) above. Refer to Section 9.6 of the Service Guidelines.

- vi) Record the circumstances in a confidential file set aside for this purpose. Refer to Section 9.3 of the Service Guidelines.

- 2.4 In cases where it is suspected that child abuse may be occurring within the family initial contacts with parents should not be made by the head but by the social worker or possibly by the police in terms of section 3.1 of this circular.

On no account should staff tell a parent about what has happened at this stage. Involvement of parents will be determined on the advice of the social work department.

2.5 **Exceptional Circumstances**

On an occasion when a member of staff is not satisfied with the head's decision in response to the grounds for concern, the member of staff should attempt further discussion with the head. If the member of staff is still unsatisfied after further discussion and continues to have serious, unresolved concerns about the possibility of abuse, the member of staff can act as a member of the public and refer the matter to the police, the Children's Reporter or social work. In such cases the member of staff should inform the head of their action. Refer to Section 10.6 of the Service Guidelines.

3. **THE RESPONSE OF SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT STAFF**

- 3.1 To fulfil the statutory duties of the social work department, the senior social worker at the local social work department area office, on being advised by the head of a school of a case or suspected case of child abuse, will:
- i) Take responsibility, in conjunction with the police if appropriate, for coordinating the enquiry, including interviewing the child and parents and if necessary assisting in arranging the medical examination (except in emergency circumstances where the head has contacted the police or hospital as described in 2.3).
 - ii) With a view to minimising the number of medical examinations to which the child is subjected, discuss with the school head, the school medical officer and the police the preferred medical inspection arrangements (recognising that in a case of suspected sexual abuse and in the absence of direct evidence the police may wish to have

the child examined by a police casualty surgeon) and notify the parents of the arrangements being made.

4. THE CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCE AND CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

- 4.1 When it is brought to the attention of the area manager of social work that there is evidence concerning the abuse of a child, the area manager will normally convene a case conference to which are invited those staff or agencies involved with the child or with the family. This will most often include the head of the school which the child attends. Heads of establishments are asked to cooperate fully with the social work department in this matter. Arrangements for the continuity of the child's education should be on the agenda of this case conference. Where the removal of a child to a place of safety makes it impracticable to continue attendance at the child's school the head teacher should discuss the child's needs with the receiving head teacher as early as possible, or where the child might require special arrangements the head should advise the appropriate Head of Service in education. The head should also advise the social work area manager of the steps taken. The area manager should advise the education service of any placements from outwith the area.
- 4.2 Once a case conference has decided that there are grounds for concern about a child, and that the child's name be placed on the child protection register, children on the register will be supervised by an officer of the social work department. This register is held at the headquarters of the social work department. The social work area manager has direct access to it. In all cases of children in attendance at school or other establishments the head of the establishment concerned will have been advised by the area social workers of the name or names of those pupils attending the establishment who are on the register. Additional injuries to children on the child protection register and suspicious or unexplained absences of these children should always be reported to the area office of the social work department immediately.
- 4.3 Children placed on the child protection register will also be referred to the reporter to the children's panel and a report may be requested from the establishment by the reporter.
- 4.4 The system of communication to establishments advising of children on the child protection register can break down when a child changes address or perhaps adopts a new name. Where there is the slightest suspicion of child abuse in the case of a child who has just enrolled in an establishment and whose background is not particularly well known, the head of the establishment should consult with the duty senior social worker to find out whether or not the child is on the child protection register under another name or in another authority.
- 4.5 Experience of child abuse cases emphasises the importance of all agencies involved with children likely to be subject to abuse working together and sharing information and concern. It is very important that the procedures contained in this circular are adhered to and that any concern about children possibly subject to abuse is shared promptly with the social work department. All staff should be thoroughly familiar with the terms of this Standard Circular and with the terms of the education service's Child Protection Guidelines (known as the Service Guidelines) and Argyll and Bute council's Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines (known as the Inter-Agency Guidelines).

5. HELP FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Child abuse leaves a legacy of emotional damage to victims and their families. They need sensitive and professional help to promote recovery. Heads of educational establishments will wish to consider how they and their staff might assist. This is best explored in the multidisciplinary forum of a case conference, and with advice from the educational psychologist for the area. Help and advice will also be available from the other agencies involved.

6. **HELP FOR EDUCATION SERVICE STAFF**

Staff have professional, ethical and contractual duties to report their concerns or suspicions related to child abuse. It is recognised that there can sometimes be stressful consequences for staff involved in dealing with such cases. It should be remembered that staff are not being asked to make allegations or carry out investigations, but are being asked to react to their suspicions or concerns for the wellbeing of children in good faith and in terms of this circular, Service Guidelines and Inter-Agency Guidelines. In these circumstances staff will be fully supported by the education service.

Yours sincerely

Director of Community Services

**Appendix (Excerpt from Supporting Children, Supporting Effective Learning:
Section G – Child Protection)**

2.4 Child Abuse - The Main Elements

2.4.1 An act or omission can be defined as abusive or presenting future risk to the child if the following elements are present:

- there must be demonstrable damage or harm to a child or a likelihood of harm to the child. Harm is defined as physical or mental injury or damage;
- the injury/state of the child must have been avoidable through action;
- concern about potential harm or risk is linked to the action or the inaction of the parent or carer

2.4.2 It is important to note that child abuse can be perpetrated on any child regardless of age, gender, understanding, stage of development, social class, religion, race or cultural background

8.2 Grounds for Concern: Action Guidance for all Education Service Employees

A. ALL STAFF should follow Action Steps 1 and 2 as outlined below.

Detailed guidance for staff on these action steps is provided in Section 10 of the child protection guidelines and procedures.

STEP 1

Immediately report your grounds for concern to the head of the establishment or to the line manager for your service (or the depute in the head's absence). Where the grounds for concern are noted by a member of service (e.g. psychological services, network support), and the child concerned does not attend an education establishment then the staff member should report to his/her head of service.

If you have direct evidence or suspicion of child abuse then the only way you can protect the child or children is to report the matter immediately. You must ensure that your ongoing involvement is in each child's best interests: you must not wait to gather evidence, nor agree to keep the information secret, nor discuss the matter with others.

STEP 2

Follow the guidance given by the head in relation to **recording** your concerns, **supporting** the child and **co-operating** with subsequent actions to investigate the grounds of concern and to protect the child or children concerned.

B. HEADS should follow the action points listed below in the order they judge appropriate for the particular circumstances of each case. There should be an absolute minimum of delay in moving through the Action Points.

Detailed guidance for heads on these action points is provided in Section 9 of the child protection guidelines and procedures.

ACTION POINTS

Treat the grounds of concern as reported by the member of staff as a priority for action.

- Consider immediate needs of all children involved.
- Take emergency action if required.
- Gather information and if appropriate seek clarification (not proof).
- Ask staff to record relevant information.
- Store all information in a confidential Incident File.

Immediately report to the duty senior social worker at the social work area office all cases where you have grounds for concern about child abuse. Discuss with the duty senior social worker the action to be taken, including when and by whom parents will be informed and the child or children interviewed.

Immediately report a medical emergency to the medical services and administer first aid if needed before reporting to the duty senior social worker.

Urgent circumstances may require help from the police, e.g. immediate avoidance of further abuse, immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, avoidance of destruction of evidence.

If a member of staff is alleged to be involved in child abuse then contact should be made with the director for education or the appropriate head of service. Decisions will then be made regarding appropriate action and the involvement of other agencies.

Record (on the same day) the grounds for concern and action taken using the Child Protection Recording Form (see paragraph 9.9).

Send the report and four copies as detailed on the form.

Keep this information, signed and dated, in the Incident File.

Cooperate fully with all statutory agencies who may become involved.

Support the child or children involved as necessary and appropriate.

The Difference Between Child Protection And Child Abuse Could Be You.