



Marykirk Primary School

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

November 2023

Child Protection Coordinator

Louise Anderson – Head Teacher

Quick references



Contacts at Marykirk Primary School

Designation	Person Responsible	Contact
Child Protection Coordinator	L Anderson	Louise.anderson5@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Child Protection Depute QIO	P Cruickshank	Paul.cruickshank@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Social Work Contacts

Local Social Work Office	01467 537 111
Out of hours Social Work	03456 081206
Police Scotland	101

Child Protection Policy

Article 19 of the UNCRC makes it clear that every child has the basic human right to dignity and protection from harm.

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Marykirk Primary School follows child protection guidelines developed within the National and Local Authority Guidance.

National Guidance:

Reference is made to:

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#)

and

[Getting it Right For Every Child](#)

Local Authority Guidance:

Practice and procedures at Marykirk Primary School are from Aberdeenshire's 'Child Protection in Education Guidance' documentation [Aberdeenshire Child Protection in Education Guidance](#)

Also, the advice from Aberdeenshire GIRFEC site: [Child Protection \(girfec-aberdeenshire.org\)](#)

How Good Is Our School 4?

2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Introduction

Child Protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families regardless of whether or not they come into direct contact with children. All staff must be fully informed of their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe. All services working with children, young people and families are expected to identify and consider the wellbeing of children and to share concerns appropriately.

It is recognised that physical and emotional safety provides a foundation for wellbeing and healthy development and the purpose of this policy is to help protect children and young people and to build the confidence of staff working within our school to work safely with children and to take responsibility for protecting them.

These guidelines are based on the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#). The National Guidance describes responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children in Scotland. It 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to assist all staff who work with children, young people and families in our school by:

- developing an ethos which safeguards and promotes the welfare and wellbeing of all children
- providing clear guidance for all staff on the roles and responsibilities involved in child protection
- ensuring that staff respond appropriately when abuse is identified
- describing the processes and procedures that all staff must follow in response to disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse
- ensuring effective multi-agency communication, collaborative working and providing a consistent framework for practice.

These guidelines apply to all employees, volunteers and others working with children and young people in educational establishments. These guidelines provide the background and the practice followed by the school.

The Context

Every child or young person has the right to be safe and protected from any avoidable situation or acts which might result in that child:

- Being physically, sexually or emotionally harmed in any way.
- Put at risk of physical, sexual or emotional harm, abuse or exploitation.
- Having their basic needs neglected or experiencing that their needs are met 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 treatment.
- Being exposed to demands and expectations which are inappropriate to their age and stage of development.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

These guidelines are based on [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#). The National Guidance provides a framework within which agencies and practitioners can understand and agree processes for working together to support, promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all children.

Child Protection is part of our approach to Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Curriculum for Excellence. Every child and young person has the right to be Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Responsible, Respected and Included (SHANARRI). They have the right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account. They should expect to get the help they need, when they need it and be able to access help close to where they live.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help protect the children and young people in our school and to build the confidence of staff to work safely with children and to take responsibility for protecting them.

All staff working in the school have a part to play in ensuring that children are safe. All staff and volunteers working in the school should be aware of the child protection guidelines and the part they need to play to protect children.

The school policy aims to provide clear and unambiguous guidance for staff. Should any aspect of the policy or the guidance within it be unclear to you then please contact the Designated Person for Child Protection.

If we believe that a child may be at risk we will act quickly to use our child protection procedures to keep that child safe. We will act to ensure that children are protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

What is child protection?

Child protection means protecting a child or young person from abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Where a child requires protection, a Child Protection Plan is used to detail how a child will be kept safe.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC website](#)

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. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature.

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. Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website](#)

Neglect

Neglect is the 'persistent' (meaning there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent) failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in a serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. The GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire Neglect Toolkit](#)

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.

Further information and resources can be found on the [Aberdeenshire GIRFEC Website](#)

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.

What is Child Protection?

Child Protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child Protection procedures (see Part 3) are initiated when police, social work or health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Approach

Child Protection is part of a continuum of collaborative duties. The GIRFEC approach promotes and supports planning in the way that best safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children, and ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest, appropriate time to prevent acute needs arising.

Child Protection processes fall at the urgent end of the continuum of services which include prevention and early intervention. The 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility of All

Child Protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families regardless of whether or not they come into direct contact with children. All staff must be fully informed of their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is accountable for the establishment's response to child protection concerns and its activities to keep children safe and well.

The Head Teacher has the following responsibilities in respect to child protection:

- Ensure all staff fully understand their responsibilities for child protection in line with the Aberdeenshire [Child Protection in Education Professional Learning Framework](#)
- Ensure establishment practice complies with local authority guidelines.
- Ensure the curriculum equips children and young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes to protect themselves.
- Appoint a suitably experienced and trained Child Protection Co-ordinator, in our school this is the Head teacher.
- Appoint a Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- Ensure that all employees know who the named Child Protection Co-ordinator is.
- Ensure arrangements are clearly communicated to all staff and contact details are displayed clearly across the setting.
- Ensure that all visiting staff, students, volunteers, temporary, newly appointed and permanent employees know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator is.
- Ensure children, young people and parents have information and understand procedures on child protection and that senior staff can be approached at any time.
- Ensure recruitment and induction procedures give due regard to child protection.
- Ensure staff contribute effectively to multi-agency child protection procedures.
- Monitor and evaluate child protection policy and procedures and, where necessary, plan for improvement.

Child Protection Co-ordinator

The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is critical to the effective operation of child protection procedures within the school. The Child Protection Co-ordinator has a legal duty to share concerns appropriately.

Each school is required to have a designated person responsible for the co-ordination and management of all matters relating to Child Protection. The designated person for our school is named on the front page of this document. The Child Protection Coordinator works closely with staff in the school, the Council and partners such as NHS, Police Scotland and Social Work for the benefit of the child.

Any member of staff who is concerned that about a possible allegation of child abuse should speak to the Child Protection Coordinator. In the absence of the Child Protection Coordinator, staff should contact the Depute Child Protection Coordinator.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator has the following responsibilities in respect to child protection:

- Be the point of contact for employees and other agencies on child protection.
- Implement the service's child protection policy and procedures.
- Comply with authority guidelines on appropriate and secure record systems for child protection information.
- Listen to and record the concerns of children and young people, staff or third parties in relation to child protection.
- Make child protection notifications of concern in line with authority procedures and guidelines.
- Liaise with other agencies to support investigations, court proceedings, Children's Hearings and case reviews.
- Implement multi-agency child protection plans.
- Communicate sensitively with parents in agreement with partner agencies.
- Have a strategic oversight of all concerns for individual children and monitor to identify patterns or accumulating concerns.
- Attend child protection training and Co-ordinators' meetings.
- Ensure that all employees have access to child protection guidelines and appropriate materials.
- Develop staff understanding of child protection, their roles in relation to child protection and the procedures.
- Ensure that all new staff receive child protection training during induction.
- Ensure that all staff in the establishment are trained annually in accordance with Aberdeenshire's child protection training calendar.

- Ensure that a child protection training record is maintained.
- Lead in the development of policy and practice to meet national and local guidance.
- Ensure appropriate support to staff affected by child protection issues.
- Promote and support curriculum input in relation to personal safety/child protection.
- Liaise and co-operate with other establishments and agencies where appropriate.
- Monitor and evaluate practice regularly.
- Use the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis to evaluate child protection arrangements and practice.

Role of individual staff members

Every member of staff working with children has a responsibility to:

- Keep children and young people safe and well.
- Be vigilant for signs that children and young people may need support, are at risk, or are suffering from harm and/or neglect.
- Immediately contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator when they have concerns or hear allegations.
- Contribute to taking action or supporting children and young people following identifications of concerns.
- Ensure their work is carried out in ways that prevent harm to children and young people and maintain safety and wellbeing of all involved.
- Undertake Child Protection training in line with the Aberdeenshire [Child Protection in Education Professional Learning Framework](#)

All members of staff should discuss any concerns they have about a child or young person with the Child Protection Co-ordinator however minor these worries may seem. The Child Protection Co-ordinator may have additional knowledge or information which, when added to, clearly indicates that the child may be at risk.

Role of visiting staff

The roles and responsibilities outlined above apply equally to staff visiting the school for whatever reason and:

- Visiting staff should familiarise themselves with the child protection arrangements in each setting they visit to ensure they are prepared in

advance to appropriately respond to any concerns about a child or young person as they arise.

- Visiting staff must ensure they know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator or Designated Officer is in each setting they work in and ensure they share any concerns, however minor, with that member of staff as soon as they arise.
- Visiting staff must check regularly that they are aware of any changes in arrangements for child protection.

Child protection training

Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Service require that all staff working within educational establishments, undertake training as detailed within the [Child Protection in Education Professional Learning Framework](#) to ensure that they are confident, well informed and supported to keep children safe from harm.

Induction

As part of the induction process for staff that work within educational establishments, all employees and volunteers must receive an overview of Child Protection procedures within one week of taking up post. Training detailed within the Child Protection in Education Professional Learning Framework for the specific workforce must be undertaken within twelve weeks of taking up appointment.

Procedure for the management of Child Protection in the school Marykirk Primary School will follow the procedures identified in Aberdeenshire Council's Child Protection in Education Guidance.

Staff can also refer to the staff procedure flowcharts contained within this document and on display.

Refer to the Aberdeenshire Flowchart. [Child Protection in Education Responding to Concerns Flowchart](#)

Remember: **IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN, IT IS YOUR DUTY TO SHARE IT. DO NOT TAKE YOUR CONCERNS HOME WITH YOU.**



Marykirk Primary School Child Protection Action Flowchart

Member of staff is concerned that a pupil may have been subject to some form of abuse. This may be as a result of observation or due to disclosure a pupil has made to the member of staff.

Member of staff will share the concern immediately with:

Mrs Anderson

If Mrs Anderson is unavailable, speak with Mr Cruickshank (QIO). If he is unavailable and concern considered urgent, member of staff to contact neighbouring Headteacher.

They will decide as to the next course of action. This may be to monitor the situation, to contact parents or to contact social work.

Social work may investigate the matter. If social work concludes there is nothing untoward, case will be closed. If social work wishes to pursue, they will action accordingly.

Every step and every action will be recorded, and information will be stored confidentially in the chronology or blue folder.