

Port Ellen Primary School – Child Protection Guidance

Date of last review:

January 2025

Review Date:

Summer 2027

Aims and Principles

At Port Ellen Primary School, the **care, safety, and wellbeing of all children** is our highest priority. In line with the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, particularly:

- **Article 19:** Children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- **Article 24:** Every child has the right to the best possible health and to a safe and clean environment.

Our approach is underpinned by **GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child)** and the **SHANARRI wellbeing indicators**, ensuring that all children are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included.

We follow the **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021**, which places a strong emphasis on early intervention, professional curiosity, and the importance of a **skilled, vigilant, and responsive workforce**.

What is Child Protection?

Child protection refers to the actions taken to **prevent or respond to abuse, neglect, or significant harm**. Harm does not have to have occurred for action to be taken—it is sufficient for a risk assessment to identify a likelihood of significant harm.

“Procedures and guidance cannot in themselves protect children; a competent, skilled and confident workforce, together with a vigilant public, can.”

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

Every member of staff has a responsibility to **safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people**. If you see something, say something.

Categories of Abuse

Children may experience one or more of the following forms of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse

Physical harm or injury caused deliberately or through failure to protect.

Signs may include:

- Unexplained injuries (bruises, burns, fractures)
- Frequent “accidents” or reluctance to change for PE
- A child who appears withdrawn or fearful

- Reluctance to go home or discomfort around specific individuals
- Self-harm or aggressive behaviour

2. Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment affecting a child's self-esteem and development.

Signs may include:

- Low self-worth or fear of blame
- Developmental delay, speech difficulties
- Overreaction to mistakes or perceived criticism
- Compulsive behaviours (stealing, rocking)
- Social withdrawal or indiscriminate friendliness

3. Sexual Abuse

Any sexual activity involving a child for the gratification of another. This includes physical contact and non-contact abuse.

Signs may include:

- Sexual knowledge or behaviours not age-appropriate
- Physical symptoms (pain or redness in the genital area)
- Disclosure of inappropriate "games" or secrets
- Regression, anxiety, self-harm
- Drawing or talking about explicit topics

4. Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Signs may include:

- Poor hygiene, constant hunger, inappropriate clothing
- Unexplained illnesses or untreated conditions
- Frequent lateness or absence
- Fatigue or developmental delays
- Emotional withdrawal or low self-esteem

Other factors that may place a child at risk include:

- Domestic abuse
 - Problem alcohol use
 - Parental mental health or substance misuse
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Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a shared responsibility for child protection and safeguarding.

As educators, we are well-placed to observe changes in behaviour, physical appearance, or emotional wellbeing. It is vital that we:

- Take time to listen to children
- Record and report concerns accurately
- Never dismiss even small worries

The **Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator** for Port Ellen Primary is **Mrs. MacDonald**. If she is unavailable, speak with the **Principal Teacher Mrs Clark**.

Responding to a Disclosure or Concern

If a child makes a disclosure or you have concerns:

DO:

- Stay calm and listen
- Reassure the child they've done the right thing
- Ask open-ended questions only if necessary
- Record the child's words as soon as possible
- Report immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator

DO NOT:

- Promise confidentiality or make unrealistic promises
 - Ask leading questions
 - Express shock or disbelief
 - Delay reporting the concern
 - Attempt to investigate the matter yourself
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Making a Referral

Once a concern is reported, the Child Protection Co-ordinator will decide whether a referral to **Social Work** or **Police Scotland** is required.

If making a referral, the following information is essential (as available):

- Child's name, date of birth, address
- Parents' names and contact details
- Your relationship to the child
- Nature of concern or disclosure
- Any known previous concerns
- Names and ages of other children in the home
- Whether the child is currently safe
- Whether the parents are aware of the concern

Keep a **dated written record** of your concerns, observations, and any action taken.

Useful Resources and Documents

- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\)](#)
 - [Standard Circular 3.23 – Argyll and Bute Education Guidance](#)
 - [UNCRC Incorporation \(Scotland\) Bill \(2024\)](#)
 - [Getting It Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)
 - *Argyll & Bute Child Protection Committee Guidance*
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Conclusion

Protecting children is **everyone's responsibility**. At Port Ellen Primary School, we are committed to working together to ensure that every child feels **safe, supported, and valued**. No concern is too small—*always pass it on*.