

Education Services  
Policy

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR  
SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING AND  
CHILD CARE SETTINGS**

**August 2019**

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**RELATED PROTOCOLS**

- Getting It Right For Every Child Practitioner Guidance
- Children Missing from Education (CME)
- Getting Our Priorities Right (GOPR)
- Underage Sexual Activity Guidance
- Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB)
- Self-Harm
- ICT in Schools
- Drug and Substance Use Incidents
- School Linked Incidents Involving Offensive Weapons

## FOREWORD

The protection of children in Dumfries and Galloway – keeping them happy, healthy and safe from harm - is fundamental to the success of the Council's aspirations for children and young people. In order for our children to have the best start in life we would wish them to flourish and become:

- responsible citizens;
- successful learners;
- confident individuals;
- effective contributors.

The commitment to fulfilling this aspiration is clearly highlighted in the first two of our Council priorities:

- we will provide a good start in life for all our children;
- we will prepare our young people for adulthood and employment.

As well as identifying and responding to concerns about children, schools, early learning and childcare settings have a key role to play in:

- promoting safety;
- providing children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values they need to choose and maintain healthy lifestyles;
- providing children and young people with information about risky behaviour;
- identifying potentially vulnerable children and young people and ensuring that they are suitably monitored and supported;
- increasing knowledge and understanding of childcare and parenting;
- giving children and young people access to information about child welfare services such as Childline.

Successful child protection depends on the knowledge, skills and confidence of those working with children and their ability to manage risk whilst dealing with the complex and uncertain environments that face our most vulnerable children and families.

It is our commitment therefore to ensure that school and childcare staff are effectively prepared and supported for their role. The end goal for our service is to ensure that when children are in need of protection, they:

- get the help they need when they need it;
- are listened to, understood and respected;
- benefit from meaningful action to minimise harm.

This policy is aimed at providing a framework for staff which will allow them to achieve these outcomes.

<https://education.gov.scot/Documents/health-and-wellbeing-eo.pdf>

Colin Grant  
Director  
Education and Learning

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Policy

Procedures and guidance cannot in themselves protect children – a competent, skilled and confident workforce, together with a vigilant public, can. Child protection is a complex system requiring the interaction of services, the public, children and families. For the system to work effectively, it is essential that everyone understands the contribution they can make to provide the best outcomes for children.

Schools, front-line education and early learning and childcare services (ELCC) play a unique and important role in ensuring all children and young people are protected. Staff in schools will often have the most daily contact with children and often parents, and therefore may be first to notice that children and their families are in need of help. A member of staff may be the first adult to whom a child, young person or parent will turn for help. When there are serious concerns, schools and other education services play a vital role in ensuring consistency of support and stability for children and young people experiencing difficult circumstances.

This policy is designed to highlight the roles and responsibilities of all those working within Education Services in Dumfries and Galloway in relation to the care and protection of children and young people, as well as specifying procedures to be followed when concerns arise.

Although the term “Education Services” is used throughout, it applies equally to other services and settings which provide care and education to children and young people, including early learning and childcare (ELCC) settings, outreach teaching services, home-school services, educational psychology services and off-site provision.

Throughout this document the term “parent” should be taken to mean a child or young person’s parent, guardian or carer.

This policy represents every school and childcare setting in Dumfries and Galloway. It is not therefore necessary for each of these to have individual child protection policies. However, every school and childcare setting in Dumfries and Galloway must ensure that their school handbook or equivalent contains a clear statement referencing this policy. School might like to base their statement on the following suggested draft:

*“The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included. All children have the right to be protected and kept safe from harm (European Convention on the Rights of the Child). We all have a part to play in this and in making sure that children and young people get the help they need when they need it. Dumfries and Galloway Council recognise that staff within schools and early childcare and education settings have a key role to play in keeping your child safe.*

*To assist schools and early childcare and education settings with this role, a Child Protection Procedure has been developed in our area. This tells all staff:*

- *how to recognise signs that a child or young person may need protection*
- *what to do if they do have a concern about a child or young person*

*All staff within our schools and early childcare and education settings have been trained to be able to recognise when a child may be suffering from, or at risk of, harm and to listen to children if they want to talk to them about anything which might be worrying them. Each school and early childcare and education setting in Dumfries and Galloway has a senior member of staff who has overall responsibility for ensuring the protection of children within their school or establishment. They are called Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC). If a member of staff does have a concern about any child s/he will discuss this with the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will decide what action might need to be taken to keep that child safe. This may involve talking to the child, other members of staff or other professionals who may be working with the child. The Child Protection Co-ordinator in our school is (insert name)".*

[The Role of the School and Early Child Care and Education Setting In Protecting Children and Young People Leaflet](#)

Audrey Lowrie  
Safeguarding Manager  
Education Services

AGREED by Education and Learning Senior Management Team Group 1 August 2019

## THE POLICY IN CONTEXT

### Protecting Children and Young People: The Children's Charter and Framework for Standards

**The Children's Charter** sets out what children and young people need and expect to help protect them and promote their welfare.

Thirteen statements from children outline their expectations of those adults who have a responsibility to respond to their needs for care and protection:

- get to know us;
- speak with us;
- listen to us;
- take us seriously;
- involve us;
- respect our privacy;
- be responsible to us;
- think about our lives as a whole;
- think carefully about how you use information about us;
- put us in touch with the right people;
- use your power to help;
- make things happen when they should;
- help us be safe.

The response to these statements is a set of pledges.

### The Pledge to Children

#### Children will:

- get the help they need when they need it;
- be seen by a professional such as a teacher, doctor or social worker to make sure they are all right and not put at more risk;
- be listened to seriously;
- be able to discuss issues in private, if and when they want to.

#### Professionals (including Education Services staff) will:

- use their power to help children;
- share information to protect children;
- minimise disruption to other parts of children's lives;
- work together effectively on children's behalf;
- be competent, confident, properly trained and supported;
- rigorously monitor services to continually improve how and what is done to help children;
- be involved with children and help them understand decisions made about their lives;
- provide children with a named adult to help them.

Schools and ELCC settings should consider how the **Charter for Children** is enacted in their day-to-day work and, when children need help and support.

The **Framework for Standards** was developed as a means for translating the commitments made to children in the Charter into practice and consists of eight standards:



- Standard 1** - Children get the help they need when they need it
- Standard 2** - Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children
- Standard 3** - Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected
- Standard 4** - Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them
- Standard 5** - Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans
- Standard 6** - Professionals are competent and confident
- Standard 7** - Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children
- Standard 8** - Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness.

The national framework for standards is the means by which the **Charter for Children** will be delivered. Staff in all professions working with children should work to these standards.

### **National Guidance**

This policy is written with reference to the “**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland**” (Scottish Government, 2014). The guidance sets out common standards for child protection services in Scotland and provides a national framework within which agencies at local level – individually and jointly – can understand and agree processes for working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The national guidance is in four parts:

**Part 1 – The context for child protection** addresses the definitions, key principles, standards and legislative framework that underpin the approach to keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

**Part 2 – Roles and responsibilities for child protection** outlines the core responsibilities of services and organisations including statutory and non-statutory services, third sector organisations, and church and faith communities. The role and functions of Child Protection Committees are addressed here, as well as the key responsibilities of Chief Officers.

**Part 3 – Identifying and responding to concerns about children** provides a framework for identifying and managing risk and outlines the common stages of responding to concerns about a child’s safety. This includes early gathering of information, joint decision-making and planning, joint investigations and medical examinations and assessment and Child Protection Case Conferences.

**Part 4 – Child protection in specific circumstances** gives additional information on dealing with specific circumstances that may impact adversely on children as well as addressing operational considerations in certain circumstances.

Full details of the national guidance can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450733.pdf>

*“This single agency procedure operates in the context of the West of Scotland Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures 2015 inter-agency child protection procedures, which have been approved and implemented within Dumfries and Galloway. These are consistent with the latest national guidance, and which are implemented in Dumfries and Galloway.*”

All relevant child protection procedures and guidance can be accessed through the following link.”

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dgchildrensservices/resources-for-professionals/information-for-practitioners/>

### **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is a Scottish Government-led approach to making sure that children and young people get the right help when they need it. Child protection has to be seen in the context of the wider *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) approach.

The Scottish Government has set out a vision that all Scotland's children and young people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. GIRFEC promotes action to improve the well-being of all children and young people in eight areas. These well-being indicators state that children and young people must be healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and above all in this context, safe.

GIRFEC has a number of key components which include:

- a focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of wellbeing;
- a common approach to gaining consent and sharing information where appropriate;
- an integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention;
- a co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, agreeing actions and outcomes, based on the well-being indicators;
- streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that result in children, young people and their families getting the right help at the right time;
- access to a named person in universal services for each child and a lead professional to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity where necessary.

At the heart of the GIRFEC approach is a shift towards early, proactive intervention in order to create a supportive environment and identify any additional support that may be required as early as possible. The Scottish Government is encouraging all agencies who work with children and parents and carers to embed the core components of the GIRFEC approach into practice. This is closely linked to the Early Years Framework which seeks to maximise positive opportunities for children to get the best start in life.

Parents/carers, families and communities have the primary role in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children; parents/carers have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that their child's needs are met and are often best placed to do so. Agencies and services should encourage and support parents/carers, families and communities in carrying out that role.

All staff who work with children and/or their carers have a role to play in ensuring that a child's needs are met, either by providing support directly or by identifying when a child and/or their family needs additional support from another agency or service (this is also true of adult services). Early intervention and support can prevent a problem from escalating into a crisis and ultimately, ensure positive outcomes for children.

Child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families, regardless of whether that work brings them into direct contact with children. All workers should be fully informed of the impact which adult behaviours can have on children, and of their responsibilities

in respect of keeping children safe. Social work services and the police have a legal responsibility to investigate child protection concerns; they can only do this if they are made aware of those concerns.

All services that work with children and/or their carers are expected to identify and consider the child's needs, share information with other agencies and work collaboratively with the child, their family and other services. Equally, services that work with adults who may pose a risk to children and young people have a responsibility to take action when risks to children or young people are identified.

Perhaps most significantly, policies and services are increasingly focused on the need for interventions to be outcome focused. This should underpin the way in which everyone working with children and young people looks at issues of child protection. GIRFEC states that, at each stage of an intervention, practitioners should ask themselves the following questions:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do *now* to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?
- What are the views of the child and parent/carer?

By keeping these questions in mind, keeping children at the centre will be more than rhetoric and become the baseline by which we must measure any involvement in a child's life.

### **Legal Context**

Children and young people and their family lives are the focus of a range of legislation aimed at protecting children which ensures their rights are respected and describes the rights of parents. The work of practitioners in education is also guided by a framework of duties and powers.

### **Who is a child?**

A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts:

- section 93(2)(a) and (b) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a child in relation to the powers and duties of the local authority. Young people between the age of 16 and 18 who are still subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing can be viewed as a child. Young people over the age of 16 may still require intervention to protect them.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to anyone under the age of 18. However, Article 1 states that this is the case unless majority is attained earlier under the law applicable to the child. Within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 a child is defined for the purposes of the Act as someone who has not attained the age of 18.

Although the differing legal definitions of the age of a child can be confusing, the priority is to ensure that a vulnerable young person who is, or may be, at risk of significant harm is offered support and protection. Where a young person between the ages of 16 and 18 requires protection, services will need to consider which legislation, if any, can be applied. This will depend on the young person's individual circumstances as well as on the particular legislation or policy framework. For example, the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 can be applied to over 16s where the criteria are met.

Special consideration will need to be given to the issue of consent and whether an intervention can be undertaken where a young person has withheld their consent. When schools have a concern about a young person aged between 16 and 18 years, they should still follow the

procedure outlined in Chapter 2 of this policy, which may involve seeking advice from Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), local social work office or Safeguarding Manager.

### **Children's Rights**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the wider basic human rights of all children and young people everywhere, without discrimination.

Children and young people have the right to:

- survival;
- develop to the fullest;
- protection from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- be treated as an individual;
- have their views heard and taken into account;
- participate fully in family, cultural and social life;
- any intervention by a public authority should be properly justified and should be supported by services working in collaboration.

It is good practice for staff to be aware of the UNCRC and for children to have opportunities to learn about their rights under the Convention.

Children learning about their rights also learn that others have rights too – and that they must not treat others in a way that infringes their rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights is incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scotland Act 1998. This includes:

- Article 3 – freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Article 8 – people's right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence.

Education professionals must balance the rights of children and the rights of parents with regard to Article 8. The role of public services must be concerned with measures to protect children where children's right to health and moral protection is not met by parents or where parents need support in this role. All treatment concerning children, including school and parental discipline, should respect children's dignity.

### **The Children (Scotland) Act 1995**

The Act has three overarching principles:

- the child's welfare is the paramount consideration;
- the child should be supported to express his/her views and those views should be taken into account when making decisions;
- no Court or Children's Hearing should make an order in relation to a child unless there is no better way of working with the child and his or her family.

It also stipulates:

- parents have rights as a means to enable them to fulfil their parental responsibilities;
- that parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children;
- that when making decisions and plans local authorities should make every effort to ensure the child remains in the family home - as far as this is consistent with the child's welfare;
- the need for all agencies to work in partnership with parents.

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 also underpins the Children's Hearing system and clearly lays out the grounds for referral to the Reporter if a child is felt to be in need of compulsory measures of supervision.

### **Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) 2004 and 2009**

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 provides the legal framework for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier, or barriers, to learning. It also promotes collaborative working among all those supporting children and young people and sets out the rights of children, young people and parents within the system. The Act has been subsequently amended by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 ("the 2009 Act") 2 the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") 3 and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 ("the 2016 Act") 4.

Under section 8 of the 2004 Act, where a local authority has responsibility for the child's or young person's education, and it has been established that the child or young person has additional support needs, the authority has a duty to provide such support as is necessary to help them benefit from school education. Under section 9 of the 2004 Act, where a local education authority has responsibility for the child's or young person's education and it has been established that the child or young person requires a CSP, the education authority has a duty to provide a CSP for the child.

The Act provides the legal framework for supporting children and young people in their school education, and their families. This framework is based on the idea of additional support needs. This broad and inclusive term applies to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, in the long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning. The Act automatically deems that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the education authority determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from school education.

The Act imposes various duties on education authorities in connection with the provision of school education for children and young people with additional support needs belonging to their area. Some of the main duties are listed below.

Education authorities must:

- make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support required for each child or young person with additional support needs for whose school education they are responsible, subject to certain exceptions
- make arrangements to identify additional support needs
- keep under consideration the additional support needs identified and the adequacy of support provided to meet the needs of each child or young person
- provide appropriate additional support for certain disabled children under school age (in this case, generally children under 3 years of age) belonging to their area who have been brought to the attention of the authority as having additional support needs arising from their disability
- presume that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the authority determine that they do not require additional support to enable them to benefit from school education; consider whether each looked after child or young person, for whose school education the authority is responsible, requires a co-ordinated support plan

- publish, review and update, as necessary, specified information about their policy and arrangements in relation to provision for identifying, addressing and keeping under consideration such provision for each child or young person with additional support needs, for whose school education the authority are responsible
- provide parents of children with additional support needs (eligible children and young people with additional support needs), for whose school education the education authority is responsible, with all of the information they are required to publish under the Act
- ensure that a summary of the information published under the Act is available, on request, from each place in the authority's area where school education is provided, regardless of whether the school is under the management of the education authority
- provide the above summary in any handbook or other publications provided by any school in the authority's area or by the authority for the purposes of providing general information about the school or, as the case may be, the services provided by the authority, and on any website maintained by any such school or the authority for that purpose
- assess the capacity and impact on wellbeing of a child over the age of 12 years to be able to exercise their rights in respect of additional support for learning, where a child of this age seeks to exercise any right under the Act; provide those children or young people, who need one, with a co-ordinated support plan and keep this plan under regular review
- provide independent and free mediation services for those parents and young people who want to use such services and publish information on these services
- have in place arrangements for resolving disputes
- at least 12 months prior to the expected school leaving date, request and take account of information and advice from appropriate agencies likely to make provision for the child or young person when he or she leaves school
- no later than 6 months before the child or young person is expected to leave school, provide information to whichever appropriate agency or agencies, as the authority thinks appropriate, may be responsible for supporting the young person once he or she leaves school, if the child (where the child has attained the age of 12 and has capacity), the child's parent or young person agrees

Further information and a more detailed overview of relevant legislation can be found within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (pg. 31 – 33 and Appendix A).



## CHAPTER 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.1 Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership

This Partnership is headed by the Chief Officers Group: Public Protection, which has responsibility for strategic leadership and oversight of delivery of services and improved outcomes for Child Protection, Adult Protection, Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women (DAVAWP) and Offender Management (Multi Agency Public Protection Agenda - MAPPA) issues affecting Dumfries and Galloway.

The Public Protection Committee lead by an Independent Chair, reports to Chief Officers and is the local strategic partnership responsible for the overview of policy and practice in relation to adult protection, child protection and violence against women and girls. The primary aim of the Committee is to shape the effective discharge of public protection activity through strategic oversight and performance review of those arrangements. The Committee is supported in delivering its aims through involvement in regional and national strategic groups.

The Committee will have a dedicated and specific remit on protection issues and overview of all protection work; assuming responsibility for the strategic development and delivery of effective services to vulnerable adults and children at risk of significant harm and comprises high level representatives from:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway
- MAPPA
- DG Health and Social Care Partnership
- Police Scotland;
- DG Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
- Scottish Prison Service
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- DG Third Sector Interface
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- Care Inspectorate
- DG Community Justice Partnership

In line with statutory responsibilities, the Committee will have a focus on high risk groups and will ensure effective arrangements are in place to manage areas of overlap across the public protection forum.

The group will ensure that appropriate planning and management together with arrangements for performance review will be a critical core function and with a clear operational focus on the identification and management of risk, the committee will ensure responses are timely, proportionate and targeted.

## 1.2 Child Protection in Education Manager

A Senior Officer must have overall responsibility for child protection – the Child Protection in Education Manager (CPEM). In Dumfries and Galloway this will be the Director, Education and Learning.

The CPEM will exercise direct responsibility for the contribution of the education authority to child protection matters. The CPEM's role will include:

- co-ordinating policy and action on child protection;
- ensuring all establishments are aware of child protection procedures, policies and Scottish Government guidance;
- ensuring that all establishments have a competent and confident Child Protection Co-ordinator;
- ensuring there is a system in place to allow other agencies to obtain education information on child protection cases during periods when the schools are closed.

The CPEM has the role of ensuring that Education Services fulfil the requirements of the National Standards for Protecting Children and demonstrates leadership and accountability for its work. The CPEM has the role of ensuring that Education and effectiveness (*National Framework Standard 8*).

## 1.3 Senior Managers Responsible for Education Services, Early Learning and Childcare

Senior Managers responsible for Education Services, including ELCC, at an authority level must ensure that the services they manage and the staff they employ are developed to fulfil their responsibilities in protecting children.

Staff must be suitable to work with children and must be trained and supported to be aware of signs that children and families need help. They must know who to contact and what to do when there are concerns.

Services must be work collaboratively, so that support for children and families is provided quickly and seamlessly.

Senior Managers must:

- ensure all staff are suitable to work with children;
- be confident that all staff can recognise signs that children and families need support;
- be confident that all staff know who to talk to and what to do when there are concerns;
- have key staff who understand the different support needs of children and families in different and challenging circumstances;
- have key staff who can play their part in supporting any decision making or investigations;
- have staff and systems in place to participate in action planning to support children and who have the capacity to respond whenever the need arises;
- ensure that support for children is based on need and does not wait for the outcome of investigations.



## 1.4 Safeguarding Manager

The local authority Safeguarding Manager will be a key enabler for schools and frontline services to play their part in keeping children and young people safe and well and supporting them.

This role includes:

- Managing the implementation, delivery and quality assurance of Child Protection and Safeguarding programmes across Education Services
- Leading on Child Protection practice development, implementation and quality assurance
- Leading on Education Services Child Protection related Policies
- Working with the GIRFEC Lead on safeguarding practice development, implementation and quality assurance
- Representing Education Services in multi-agency Child Protection forums
- Leading within the Supporting Learners Service the implementation of GIRFEC practice
- Managing the escalation resolution process within Education Services and lead on behalf of Education Services on escalation procedures
- Address issues of problematic practice relating to safeguarding as they arise within Education Services.

The Safeguarding Managers key tasks will include:

- Being a point of contact for school staff to offer advice, guidance and support with regard to Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns, practice and procedure.
- Providing Child Protection training to all Education Services staff.
- Coordinating Children Missing from Education processes.
- Providing relevant training to support the competency of Child Protection Coordinators and Named Persons with regard to Safeguarding.
- Reviewing and update of Safeguarding Policies.
- Coordinating Named Person Service cover during school holiday periods.
- Managing staff as required to support CP and GIRFEC activities.
- Developing and facilitating single agency quality assurance activities.

### Support and Advice:

- guiding and advising staff and CP Coordinators on aspects of their day-to-day work in which care and welfare issues, including child protection and GIRFEC, need to be considered;
- having an awareness of the particular needs arising from the diversity of the local population to plan responses to special issues (need for translation services);
- having systems in place to update schools and other education services on key issues;
- having the capacity to discuss in detail with staff in schools and services any complex concerns which require consideration and the possibility of senior involvement.

### Staff Development

The Safeguarding Manager has a development role with schools and staff to support them to achieve the best outcomes for children who need help, and to ensure that:

- staff are competent and confident (National Framework Standard 6);
- the Authority and its schools work together with other agencies to assess needs and risks and develop plans (National Framework Standard 5).

The Safeguarding Manager will ensure:

- systems are in place so that all staff are trained in child protection awareness and receive refreshers at regular intervals;
- schools and other education services are provided with training tools and resources for local use;
- CP Coordinators and senior managers are provided with regular specialist training for their role;
- senior managers in schools and other services are trained in de-briefing and supporting staff who are involved in supporting children, young people and families;
- staff in key child protection and personal support roles are enabled to network and share good practice;
- staff in key child protection and personal support roles are supported to learn from practice throughout Scotland and other countries;
- staff have opportunities for multi-agency training and networking;
- regular review with partner agencies of the quality of processes, referrals, investigations and support planning in order to develop staff accordingly;
- schools are kept informed of child protection and GIRFEC developments;
- that systems and structures support the delivery of high standards of practice in relation to GIRFEC and Child Protection.

The task of enabling schools to play their part in keeping children safe and their wellbeing optimised cannot be left to guidance alone. The Safeguarding Manager has a support and development role for Senior Managers across the Education Authority, to ensure schools and education services fulfil the requirements of the National Standards for Protecting Children.

## **1.5 Headteachers and Early Learning Childcare Managers**

The Headteacher or ELCC Manager has a crucial role in ensuring the existence of a climate in which:

- all staff understand and take seriously their responsibilities for child protection;
- meeting children's needs is given high priority;
- there are effective working relationships with other agencies.

They have the responsibility to nominate a suitably experienced and trained person as Child Protection Co-ordinator and ensure this person has adequate time and support to carry out this remit. It may be in some instances that the Headteacher is the most appropriate person to assume this role, and the following may be taken into consideration:

- designating this role to a member of staff other than the Headteacher enables a "two heads are better than one" approach to reflection and clear thinking;
- the role is closely aligned to personal support for pupils and the staff member may effectively lead on both child protection and pastoral care if there is sufficient capacity;
- complex child protection cases can be time consuming and long term. It may not be realistic for Headteachers to shoulder all the responsibility for these as well as other issues;
- having more than one member of staff able to lead on child protection issues provides a safeguard during those times when there is staff absence.

No single individual can protect children by acting alone. It is the sharing of information, collective thinking and collaborative action that enables decisions to be made in the best interests of children.

The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate child protection **Depute Arrangements** are in place:

- it is unacceptable for a child not to receive the help they need when they need it because of inadequate child protection arrangements within schools and childcare settings;
- there must always be someone available to whom staff can talk if they have a concern about a child.
- If the Child Protection Co-ordinator is to be out of school or the childcare setting, then all staff should be clear about whom they should approach if they have concerns about a child or young person
- the Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator can be another senior member of staff, the Headteacher – or arrangements can be agreed for a Child Protection Co-ordinator from another school within the school's cluster to deputise in the absence of their own Child Protection Co-ordinator. Whatever the arrangements are, these should be clearly communicated to all staff and contact details displayed in the school office.

The Headteacher will ensure a positive, caring school ethos by:

- conveying the importance of care and welfare and child protection to all staff and making a visible commitment in the school to child protection, through prevention as well as responding to children's and young people's needs;
- ensuring children, young people and parents have information and understand the school's procedures on care and welfare and child protection, and that staff can be approached at any time;
- ensuring a climate in which there are mutually trusting and respectful relationships between staff, children and young people, and parents.

The Headteacher will ensure continuous improvement by:

- ensuring the school curriculum reflects a progressive approach to enable children and young people to develop their skills to respect others, to protect themselves, and develop their resilience to recover from adverse events;
- ensuring that other services used by the school reflect appropriate consideration of care and welfare and child protection;
- completion of the Child Protection Checklist, circulated by the Safeguarding Manager at the start of each new session, to evaluate the school's child protection arrangements and practice.

The Headteacher will ensure staff are prepared and supported to respond to vulnerable children by:

- ensuring training for all staff on child protection is given appropriate priority including all new, temporary, supply staff and volunteer helpers. This should include an annual review with all staff at the beginning of the autumn session;
- ensuring recruitment and induction procedures give due regard to child protection;
- ensuring support and de-briefing for staff involved in child protection cases.

The Headteacher will display accountability by:

- maintaining an overview of any information received by the Child Protection Co-ordinator, decisions on recording and referral, subsequent liaison with other agencies during investigation, proceedings and action planning to support children and young people;
- developing the school's response to the needs of other children and young people following child protection action; develop a communication strategy if necessary;
- undertaking appropriate action in conjunction with the Safeguarding Manager when there are concerns or allegations about a member of school staff (See Flowchart Appendix 3).

**The Headteacher is ultimately accountable for the school's actions in response to child protection concerns and its activities to keep children safe and well.**

- they are responsible for the school's effective contribution to inter-agency child protection procedures, including:
  - reports being submitted timeously for Child Protection Case Conferences or for Children's Hearings;
  - the most appropriate member of staff attending Case Conferences or Children's Hearings;
  - the school contributing to and implementing child protection plans.

## **1.6 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 or childcare setting.

The qualities required of the Child Protection Co-ordinator are:

- accessibility and readiness to listen;
- empathy with children and young people;
- clear thinking and ability to be objective;
- good record keeping and report writing skills;
- willingness to seek advice and draw on others' experience;
- familiarity with the roles of other professionals who work with children and young people and who are concerned with child protection;
- determination.

They will be the main point of contact for school or childcare staff and for external agencies seeking contact with the school on child protection matters.

They will have an oversight of all concerns, however minor, for any child and will therefore have the ability to identify patterns of, or accumulating concerns, at an early enough stage to ensure the child or young person is supported and protected effectively.

### **Key tasks of the Child Protection Co-ordinator include:**

#### **Information:**

- helping all staff to maintain an awareness of child protection issues and to know when and how to refer to the Child Protection Co-ordinator;
- ensuring school-based information on care and welfare and child protection issues is up to date and easy to find;
- providing advice to staff on aspects of their day-to-day work in which care and welfare and child protection issues may need to be considered.

#### **Communication:**

- being the first contact for staff who hear a disclosure or identify child protection concerns;
- following through notifications by staff as described in 'Responding to Concerns' (*Chapter 2*);
- liaising with other agencies to support investigations, court proceedings, Children's Hearings and case reviews;
- communicating with named person/lead professional to ensure they are kept informed;

- liaising with school staff to ensure appropriate support to children affected by care and welfare and child protection issues;
- ensuring appropriate support to staff affected by care and welfare and child protection issues;
- ensuring appropriate and sensitive communication with parents.

#### **Recording and reporting:**

- ensuring appropriate measures for the secure storage of information on children and child protection information concerning individuals, in partnership with staff responsible for personal support for children and young people;
- ensuring that when concerns arise about any child, a chronology is started or added to in respect of that child (Appendix 6).

#### **Staff Development:**

- taking responsibility for ensuring her/his own knowledge of child protection matters is up to date through regular attendance at authority and inter-agency training events;
- having responsibility for developing staff understanding of child protection, their roles in relation to child protection and the procedures to be followed using the training materials supplied by the local authority (see Chapter 5).

### **1.7 Role of the Named Person (Education)**

It is acknowledged that whilst the Child Protection Coordinator has managerial oversight and is the main point of contact for school and ELCC staff who have child protection concerns, all such information should be shared with the child's Named Person (where this role differs). Likewise, if an external agency makes contact with the Named Person over a child protection matter, for example with regard to an Initial Referral Discussion (IRD), where this role differs from the Child Protection Coordinator, the Named Person will liaise closely with the Child Protection Coordinator.

### **1.8 All Staff Working in Schools or Early Learning Childcare Settings**

Schools and ELCC settings which take a broad and inclusive view of their school/childcare team and harness the skills and experience of a wide range of individuals in helping to keep children safe and well, will respond effectively to their concerns. Children and young people may act differently in different parts of the school or childcare setting during different parts of the day.

The observations of non-teaching staff can provide a different perspective on children's wellbeing. Children and young people may make their own choice of which adult to confide in. Involving all adults in the school or ELCC setting ensures that the trust placed in one adult by a child or young person can be honoured by the school or childcare setting in the most sensitive and effective way.

Every school and childcare setting should ensure that all staff:

- are aware of their role in helping to keep children and young people safe and well;
- are trained in seeing signs that children and young people need support, are at risk, are suffering from harm and/or neglect;
- understand their responsibility to explain to children and young people that they must pass on information when they believe children and young people are at risk of harm;

- know whom to contact when they have concerns or hear allegations or disclosures;
- feel supported to contribute to the school's role in taking action or supporting children and young people following identification of concerns;
- are helped to ensure their work is properly carried out in ways that prevent harm to children and young people and maintain the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

**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 – sometimes known as “the jigsaw effect”.**

*“It is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a child can be seen to be in need or at risk of harm”.* (What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, DoH 2003).

### **1.9 Visiting Staff including Specialist Teachers and Supply Staff**

The roles and responsibilities outlined above apply equally to staff visiting the school for whatever reason. Visiting staff should familiarise themselves with the child protection arrangements in each school or childcare 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. They should know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator is and ensure they share any concerns, however minor, with that member of staff as soon as these arise.

Similarly, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should ensure that any information, which is necessary to help visiting staff deal sensitively with children and young people in different situations, is shared with them.

### **1.10 Educational Psychologists**

Educational Psychologists often act in an advisory/ consultative capacity to schools regarding children. Occasionally during such consultation, child protection issues arise. These should be dealt with by following the procedures outlined in Chapter 2.

The seeking of any such advice by schools should not be seen as an additional or alternative step prior to reporting concerns.

Support may be offered to members of school staff involved in such cases should this be appropriate (see *Staff Support, Chapter 5*).

Educational Psychologists, where they are directly involved with a case for which a Child Protection Case Conference is convened, will attend or submit a report, and should be familiar with the procedures in such conferences.

During such a conference, Educational Psychologists will participate in inter-agency discussion and may agree to be part of the Core Group identified to construct and progress the Child Protection Plan. They will identify what their continuing role with the child or young person might be, if any (such as continuing input and/or assessment as appropriate).



Educational Psychologists have a duty to provide reports to the Reporter to the Children's Panel, for cases which are known to them, and/or attend Children's Hearings if this is appropriate and possible.

### 1.11 Supporting Learners Staff (SLS)

Supporting Learners Staff may have a role which involves direct work with children and young people and their families and are therefore well positioned to identify conditions that may pose a risk to children e.g. parental substance misuse or inappropriate living conditions.

#### During school hours

Where child protection concerns are identified, SLS should report these promptly to the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator and notify their Line Manager of action taken.

#### Outwith school hours / during school holidays

Some SLS will also have contact with families out with school hours and during school holidays. In recognition of this a specific procedure for this group of staff has been developed and can be found at (Appendix 5).

### 1.12 Specialist Teachers, Additional Support for Learning and Support Staff

In exceptional circumstances Specialist Staff, Additional Support for Learning, may be working with children who are not attending any school or ELCC provision.

This would include:

- Hearing and Visual Impairment teachers;
- English as Additional Language teachers;
- Inclusion Support teachers;
- Pre-School Education Visitors.

If such a member of staff has child protection concerns regarding such a child, they should make a direct referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

If they require advice or consultation, they should contact their Line Manager or the Safeguarding Manager.

**N.B. Seeking such advice is not a substitute for making a referral and should not delay concerns being reported to the relevant agencies.**

In these circumstances, the worker should complete the Request for Assistance – available here: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dgchildrenservices/resources-for-professionals/338-2/>

If staff are working with a child enrolled in a school, they should contact the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator when they have a concern about a child.

### 1.13 Outdoor Education

Instructors who have any child protection concerns regarding a child should inform the Child Protection Coordinator of the school which the child attends. This should happen the same day. The Child Protection Coordinator for the outdoor education team will help to facilitate this if necessary. If for any reason the outdoor education CP Co-ordinator is not available, the Education Services Safeguarding Manager will support staff in reporting their concerns.

### 1.14 ELCC settings

As outlined in the Introduction, ELCC Services have the same responsibilities to fulfil towards children and young people, as local authority schools and nurseries. The roles and responsibilities outlined above apply to these settings also – the Child Care Manager should assume the same roles and responsibilities as the Head Teacher and a senior member of staff should be designated as Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Thereafter, the same roles and responsibilities as outlined above apply.

### 1.15 Local Authority Nursery Managers

In keeping with the job description of local authority nursery managers, they:

*“Manage all aspects of care and wellbeing, which meets the need of the individual child in line with the Council’s Policies, including Child Protection and the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child.”*

In local authority nurseries, the Nursery Manager will undertake the responsibilities of a Depute Child Co-ordinator for the nursery only. This will mean, that in terms of reporting:

- Nursery staff would still share concerns with the Child Protection Co-ordinator in the first instance, however in the absence of the Child Protection Co-ordinator, this can be shared with the Nursery Manager as Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator (Nursery only).
- Where the Child Protection Coordinator becomes aware of a Child Protection matter, they will ensure that the Nursery Manager, as Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator (Nursery only) is informed.
- In the absence of the Child Protection Co-ordinator, the Nursery Manager will, if necessary, take appropriate action, as per the Child Protection Policy.
- Where the Nursery Manager becomes aware of any child protection concerns, they must share this information with the Child Protection Co-ordinator, in order that they can maintain an overview as expected by Education Scotland.

It is expected that all nursery managers will complete the GIRFEC Skills Framework to evaluate their skills relating to Child Protection and that they will attend the relevant Multi-Agency Child



Protection Training. This Framework should be returned to the Safeguarding Manager once completed.

#### Updating Chronologies:

- Where an incident has arisen, or an update received, this should be recorded by the person receiving the information.
- Where a subsequent outcome is to be recorded, this should be recorded by the person involved in the meeting/intervention etc.

***It is crucial that the Child Protection Co-ordinator and the Nursery Manager are both aware of any significant events;*** the Nursery Manager having a child protection responsibility for nursery, and the Child Protection Co-ordinator as the overall designated manager (reporting to Head Teacher, where applicable).

Please note: Nursery Managers should be given access to view pastoral notes. Currently, this can only be done by allowing access to all pupil chronologies however, nursery managers should, under no circumstance, access the chronology of any child other than nursery pupils.

## 1.16 Childminders

It is recognised that Childminders are in a unique position in providing care and support for children and families as they are more likely to be working alone. In recognition of this the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has produced Safe and Secure a good practice guide and Childminders should refer to this for specific guidance. Any concerns that a child may have been harmed or is being neglected should be reported to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

If the Childminder has some concerns but is not sure whether these are of a child protection nature or not, they should contact MASH or Social Work for advice.

If they wish some advice about child protection procedures, processes or training etc, they should contact their Local Childminding Development Officer or SCMA national helpline.

When parents first make contact with a Childminder, the Childminder should make it clear that should they have concerns, whilst they will always endeavour to discuss these with the parents directly, there may be occasions when they are required to share this information with other agencies. All childminders should have a written child protection policy which makes this clear and which should be shared with the parent/s when they start.

SCMA offer child protection training for groups of 6 or more childminders on demand. This training is also available as an e-Learning option for individual childminders.

Childminders can also use the staff handout (Appendix 9).

### 1.17 Staff working in schools not employed by Education Services (e.g. janitorial, catering, CLD, AMEY staff etc)

The roles and responsibilities outlined in Chapter 1 apply equally to staff working within schools for whatever reason. These members of staff should familiarise themselves with the child protection arrangements within the schools or childcare settings they work, to ensure they are prepared in advance to respond appropriately to any concerns about a child or young person as they arise. They should know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator is and ensure they share any concerns, however minor, with that member of staff as soon as these arise.

Senior and Line Managers of these staff should ensure that as part of their induction and on an ongoing basis, the members of staff for whom they have responsibility, are clear about their roles and responsibilities when it comes to responding to concerns they may have. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will ensure that the staff member is aware of the child protection arrangements within the individual school during the first week of employment. It is the responsibility of the staff member's line manager to ensure that they have access to child protection training and information as agreed within their own organisation. This may be as part of the Education Services Specific Level Child Protection Training which occurs on a three yearly rolling programme and is delivered through the cluster model or through Dumfries and Galloway Child Protection e-Learning course. In addition, Child Protection Co-ordinators should ensure that these members of staff are included in the annual refresher regarding child protection arrangements within the school.

If staff employed by Amey need to take any action regarding a concern they have about a child or about another member of staff, in addition to informing the Child Protection Co-ordinator as outlined above they should also make their own line manager aware of the situation **without sharing any detail**. If for any reason a line manager should require any further details, they should discuss this directly with the school's Child Protection Officer. It is important that staff members not employed by Education Services are supported in the same way that an employee of Education Services would be.

## CHAPTER 2: IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

### 2.1 Identification of Concerns

Risk is a part of everyday life and can be positive as well as negative. In the context of this guidance, risk is the **likelihood** or **probability** of a particular outcome given the presence of adverse factors in a child's life.

Children may be harmed by abuse or neglect, either suddenly or over a longer period of time. This may take several different forms. Fuller information on signs of harm can be found in **(Chapters 6 and 7)**.

Children and young people may be harmed by adult members of the family, siblings, carers, adult friends, teachers, youth leaders, other children or strangers.

Education Services and childcare staff are in a position to notice more subtle signs which may be indicative of abuse and may present as lower level concerns which develop into patterns over time.

Factors which increase children and young people's vulnerability include:

- domestic violence;
- parental misuse of drugs or alcohol;
- parental mental illness.

Staff should be aware of signs and indicators of abuse and neglect (covered in General Child Protection training), such as:

- physical injury caused by others;
- physical punishment by blows to the head, shaking or punishment using an implement;
- sexual abuse or organised abuse such as child sexual exploitation or ritual abuse;
- failure to thrive, even though they have no specific medical condition;
- emotional abuse;
- physical neglect;
- being emotionally or physically affected by parental drug or alcohol abuse;
- fabricated induced illness;
- racial abuse;
- being forced to accept cultural practices such as circumcision, forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

Staff should be able to judge when children's and young people's own behaviour puts them at risk, or when their behaviour may be a response to the trauma of abuse or neglect, such as:

- inappropriate use of computers or social media;
- exploitative relationships;
- bullying;
- misuse of drugs or alcohol;
- sexually explicit language or behaviour;
- eating disorders;
- self-harming;
- running away;
- going missing during the school day.

Staff should also recognise that children with additional support needs and/or complex disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse for many reasons including:

- inability to recognise inappropriate behaviours;
- reduced opportunities for socialisation;
- increased experiences of intimate care, sometimes from multiple carers;
- impaired communication skills;
- low self-esteem and self-image;
- increased family stresses;
- hesitancy to report concerns due to no obvious alternative supports.

From a child protection perspective, it is the risk of “significant harm” that is central here: where concerns are raised about the potential significant harm to a child, they should be considered child protection concerns. There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm: sometimes, it can be a single traumatic event, such as a violent assault or poisoning; often, it is a combination of significant events which can interrupt, change or damage the child’s physical and psychological development.

The challenge for practitioners is identifying which children require protective measures.

## 2.2 The GIRFEC Practice Model: Assessing Need and Risk

Dumfries and Galloway’s GIRFEC Resources:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dgchildrensservices/resources-for-professionals/338-2/>

When considering the immediate needs of a child or young person once a concern about their possible safety is raised, it is essential that practitioners consider the following questions:

- Is this child or young person at immediate risk?
- What is placing this child at immediate risk?
- What needs to happen to remove this risk now?

The GIRFEC approach stresses the importance of understanding risks and needs within a framework of the child’s whole world and well-being. Every child needs to be healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, included, responsible and safe. When assessing a child all staff should therefore be alert to the potential risk factors in their life. The GIRFEC “practice model” presents a series of tools that are integral to the use of risk assessment:

- the Wellbeing Indicators; the My World Triangle; the Resilience Matrix.

In addition to these the National Risk Framework supports the assessment and understanding of risk.

In some cases where a risk assessment is being undertaken, a Child’s Plan may already be in place and this should be used and added to, paying attention to any new areas that may result in adverse outcomes for a child or young person.

The Well-being Indicators provide the broad framework for identifying a child’s needs. They do so under eight headings, which should form the basis for single agency planning around the individual child: Safe; Healthy; Achieving; Nurtured; Active; Respected; Responsible; and

Included. These headings are used to identify what needs to change in the Child's Plan and how progress on outcomes should be monitored and recorded. Because of their role in Child's Plans (and Child Protection Plans), they are a key element in the identification of child protection concerns and management of risk.

The **My World Triangle** serves as a starting point for considering what risks might be present in a child's life. The Triangle focuses attention on the three dimensions of a child's world:

- the child themselves;
- their family;
- their wider environment.

Once a concern has arisen, the Triangle is a useful tool for gathering information as part of an investigation, focusing attention on areas where there may be risks of significant harm or assessing the factors that have caused the concerns to arise, as expressed in the following diagram:



### Identifying vulnerabilities and the need for risk assessment

Using the My World Triangle to identify risk factors is the first step in assessing risk. The next step is to look at how those factors impact on the individual child. The Resilience Matrix developed by Daniel and Wassell provides a framework for weighing up risks against protective factors for the individual child. By helping practitioners make sense of the relationship between the child's levels of vulnerability or resilience and the world around them, the matrix may also help highlight areas of risk that need more comprehensive or specialist assessment and analysis. The matrix can be used to examine factors in relation to:

- vulnerability and unmet needs;
- adversity;

- strengths or protective factors;
- resilience.

This step marks the start of the process of “unpacking” the individual child’s circumstances and exploring their potential impact. The child’s circumstances can be plotted on each of the two continuums, allowing the practitioner to see where the impact of these circumstances places them within the matrix and, therefore, how at risk they are:

- resilience within a protective environment (low risk);
- resilience within adverse circumstances (medium risk);
- vulnerability within a protective environment (medium risk);
- vulnerability within adverse circumstances (high risk);

Where it emerges that a vulnerable child is living in a situation with a high level of adversity, a detailed risk assessment should be carried out. A number of specialist tools can be used. These may focus on specific family/environmental circumstances (such as parental alcohol and/or drug misuse) and/or address particular groups of children (such as children with disability or communication difficulties).

### **2.3 Responding to Concerns/Disclosures or Allegations**

Concerns regarding children and young people are likely to emerge in one or more of the following ways:

- the child discloses abuse;
- a member of staff observes an injury which may be indicative of abuse;
- sustained concerns about the presentation or behaviour of a child which may be indicative of abuse;
- the school or childcare setting is contacted by another agency as part of a child protection inquiry or investigation;
- another parent, friend of the child or member of the public may express concern or make an allegation of child abuse.

Children and young people often take time to seek out and test adults to whom they wish to disclose abuse. Disclosure is more often a process than an event.

#### **Whoever receives the information from the child/other should:**

- listen carefully;
- let the child/person tell their story;
- reassure the child/person;
- explain that s/he will have to share the information with someone else (the Child Protection Co-ordinator);
- inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator immediately (or the depute if they are not available).

#### **Whoever receives the information from the child/other should not:**

- promise to keep secrets / guarantee confidentiality;
- express their own views on the matter;



- interview the child or inquire into details – this is the responsibility of Social Work and/or Police as the investigating agencies who are trained in investigative interviewing of children.

Questions inappropriately phrased could be thought to be suggestive and then may lead to evidence being held as inadmissible by the Court in future criminal proceedings.

If clarification from the child is required, this should be limited to what may be necessary to establish whether there is a reasonable cause for concern and to ascertain what the child wishes to happen.

## 2.4 Action to be taken

Whenever any member of staff has concerns about a child or young person, s/he should discuss these immediately with the Child Protection Co-ordinator or their Depute.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator will:

- listen to and record concerns;
- seek further information from other staff if necessary;
- review the chronology held on the child and those of any siblings;
- seek information from any other agency known to be involved with the child or family;
- if necessary, seek advice from the Safeguarding Manager (**N.B. seeking such advice is not a substitute for making a referral and should not delay concerns being reported to the relevant agencies**);
- on the basis of the collected information, arrive at a judgement as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child is at risk of harm and in need of protection.

If the Child Protection Coordinator concludes that the child may be in need of protection, they will:

- consider whether immediate action is necessary to protect the child;
- consider whether parents should be notified at this stage (for guidance, refer to “Communication with parents”, 2.5);
- make a child protection telephone referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) using the Telephone Referral Checklist (Appendix 2) if required;
- if the child is already involved with Social Work it is courteous to make the worker or their senior aware that a new risk has arisen which requires a child protection referral to the MASH;
- contribute information to the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) if necessary;
- ensure the child is informed by the most appropriate person what is going to happen;
- ensure that the referral is followed up in writing within 2 working days using the Child’s Assessment Report and Request for Assistance Form – available on:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dgchildrensservices/resources-for-professionals/338-2/>

A flow-chart summarising the above procedure is contained in (Appendix 1).

**Please note: Networking** - Where a pupil is networking, the staff member will share the concern with the Child Protection Co-ordinator in the establishment where the concern or disclosure arose or was made. The CPC will then contact the CPC or the Depute CPC in the pupils’ base school.

The responsibility for making a child protection referral rests with the Child Protection Co-ordinator although they may delegate this task to the Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator, or the

named person if appropriate. If not making the referral, the Child Protection Co-ordinator will retain managerial oversight of its quality and any follow-up. They should counter-sign the referral paperwork.

If the child subsequently wishes to withdraw the allegation, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should decide whether the concerns should still be referred to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Once the referral has been made and to ensure follow up, the Child Protection Co-ordinator will:

- ensure the detail and action taken is recorded on the child's chronology;
- consider what further action the school itself should take to provide further support for the child and, if appropriate, siblings;
- support the staff member who raised the concerns by appropriate debriefing and ensuring they are kept informed of decisions made and actions taken;
- make a decision regarding which other members of staff need to be informed (see Sharing Information 2.10);
- clarify with MASH/Social Work that the agreed action has been followed through and, where not, make contact with the relevant managers and, where required, the Safeguarding Manager;
- co-ordinate the preparation of reports on the child in response to requests from other agencies;
- attend, or arrange for a suitable nominee to attend Child Protection Case Conferences Core Group Meetings and Children's Hearings as required (for guidance, see Chapter 4);
- ensure that school contributions to a child protection plan are implemented;
- provide the child with information about other sources of support e.g. Childline.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator concludes the child is not at risk of harm, they should refer to the GIRFEC practice model (above) and using Dumfries and Galloway's GIRFEC Practitioner Guidance and Child's Assessment Report (CAR) paperwork, undertake an assessment of the child's needs. This should enable them to reach a conclusion as to whether the child may benefit from the involvement of other agencies for support or further assessment.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator concludes that the child is not in need of protection and that referral to another agency is not required, they should:

- consider what action the school needs to take to provide support for the child;
- decide how best to advise parents of the identified concerns;
- ensure the child's chronology is updated or begin one for this child if there is not one already in existence;
- record the decision, reasons for the decision, the date and who else was involved in the discussion and decision-making.

A decision may be reached that the child should be monitored for a specified and time-limited period. This should involve all members of staff involved with the child.

At the end of the monitoring period the information gathered should be reviewed by the staff group identified and analysed. The Child Protection Co-ordinator may choose to involve the Safeguarding Manager in this stage. Again, professional judgement will be required as to what further action is required. All such arrangements and decisions reached should be clearly recorded and added to the child's chronology.



If the Child Protection Co-ordinator concludes that the child is not in need of protection but may benefit from support, assessment or other service provision, they will, using Dumfries and Galloway's GIRFEC Practitioner Guidance:

- discuss with the parents (and child if appropriate) the nature of concerns and why support from another agency may benefit the child or young person;
- seek consent from the parents and child to share information and their assessment with that agency;
- with their agreement, make a telephone referral to the relevant agency and follow that up with a copy of their CAR.

If the assessment concludes that a referral to Social Work is needed, in the case of parents not consenting to a referral to that agency, the Child Protection Co-ordinator must make a judgement as to whether the child or young person's welfare will suffer without that referral – again, advice can be sought from the Safeguarding Manager if required, and parents can be notified of the intention to do so.

If, believing it is in the child's best interests to continue with the referral, they should proceed and advise parents they intend to do so but will represent the parents' and child's views when making the referral.

Again, all actions taken, and decisions reached should be clearly recorded and an entry included in the child's chronology.

## 2.5 Communication with Parents/Carers

The guiding principle to remember in relation to communication with parents or carers is that parents should always be informed when the school or nursery has concerns about their child. When the school intends to make a referral to another agency, this should usually be discussed with parents.

If concerns are of a long standing or neglectful nature, these should have been discussed with parents on an ongoing basis. If these concerns have reached a stage where, based on conclusions from a Child's Assessment Report, the Child Protection Co-ordinator intends to make a referral to another agency, this should be discussed with parents and the child (where appropriate) - see also Dumfries and Galloway's GIRFEC Practitioner Guidance.

The exception to this would be if the Child Protection Co-ordinator believes a child may have been harmed by a parent or carer, a criminal offence may have been committed against the child by a family member, or by doing so the child would be placed at a higher level of risk. In these circumstances, s/he should discuss and agree with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) when making the telephone referral how parents are to be made aware of the referral. Often means and methods of communication with parents/carers and others will be agreed through an Initial Referral Discussion (IRD).

**N.B.** If an Initial Referral Discussion is being convened, it is **not** the role of the school to inform parents of this.

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator is communicating with parents after a discussion with MASH, they should establish during the telephone discussion with MASH exactly what information they are able to share with parents.

If they are not sure about whether to discuss the referral with parents, they should take advice from Social Work or the Safeguarding Manager.

When there are concerns and action is required, the Child Protection Co-ordinator in discussion with parents should:

- explain the school's responsibilities in simple language;
- provide named contacts for further information in the school and authority;
- give details of organisations that can help parents, such as translating services, advocacy or support;
- explain the school's policy on recording action in response to concerns.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator should ensure the parent has a copy of the leaflet, "The role of the school in protecting children and young people" which can be accessed on GLOW:

[The Role of the School and Early Child Care and Education Setting In Protecting Children and Young People Leaflet](#)

If, as part of a Child Protection Inquiry, it is agreed that social workers and/or police officers need to see children while they are at school, the Initial Referral Discussion will agree how consent from parents will be sought. Usually, this will be obtained by the social workers and police undertaking the Inquiry. However, there may be exceptional circumstances when IRD can also decide that the level of risk or the circumstances require the child/ren to be interviewed in the School environment without parental consent.

## **2.6 Police Involvement**

Child protection concerns will normally be passed directly to Social Work, who will involve the police in due course in line with local inter-agency guidelines.

Schools and childcare settings should consider contacting the police directly when:

- there are immediate concerns for a child's safety;
- staff suspect a crime has been committed or is about to be committed;
- there are threats or intimidation of staff or children by a parent (or a non-contact parent/relative) or other adult;
- there are concerns about the motivation of an individual seen in the vicinity of the school;
- a child reports an incident or crime to a member of staff that occurred on the way to school.

Whilst noting the positive impact of the work of school and community-based police officers, Child Protection Co-ordinators should ensure that when discussing concerns with an officer they continue to follow the procedure set out in Section 2.4 of this procedure.

## **2.7 Contact by another Agency**

When another agency contacts the school or childcare setting regarding possible child protection concerns this should be directed to the Child Protection Co-ordinator. Where contact is made with

the Named Person (where this role differs) the Named Person should liaise closely with the Child Protection Coordinator.

It is the role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator to provide clear and suitably detailed information about the child's wellbeing and presentation within the school environment within an appropriate timescale.

Through discreet contact with other members of staff the Child Protection Co-ordinator should gather these details as rapidly as is consistent with ensuring good quality information – always bearing in mind that any undue delay in providing the information to the other agency may result in the child being exposed to unnecessary risk.

If the request for information is by Social Work and relates to a child protection concern they have received, this should be responded to within 2 hours where at all possible. If that cannot be achieved, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should contact Social Work, giving them the information that they do have and specifying a timescale for when they will be able to provide additional information.

The matter should not be discussed with the child unless the other agency has specifically requested this.

A record of information requested and provided should be recorded in the child's chronology. If no chronology is in place, one should be started at this point.

## **2.8 Report by a member of the public, a relative or anonymous call to the school**

Staff should always respond to any such information or allegation using the same steps outlined previously.

In addition, if possible, the concerned adult should be encouraged to pass their concerns directly to the relevant Social Work office. Details of how to do so should be given to the person and support offered e.g. the use of the school office phone.

Staff should not assume that members of the public, relatives or anonymous persons will share their concerns as requested and therefore, the Child Protection Co-ordinator must take responsibility for further action, making it clear to the person the actions they will take.

From this stage the Child Protection Co-ordinator's responsibilities are the same as previously outlined.

## **2.9 Scottish Qualifications Authority**

Each year a very small number of candidate scripts or coursework are submitted which indicate concerns about the wellbeing of a pupil. This may be because of something the candidate has written which suggests there may be a risk to their welfare. It is the policy of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to refer these matters to the local authority responsible for the child

or young person. Sometimes this will be directly to the Headteacher and under these circumstances normal child protection procedures should be implemented.

Sometimes the SQA will refer their concerns to a nominated contact within the local authority. In Dumfries and Galloway, the nominated contact is the Safeguarding Manager.

When Safeguarding Manager is contacted about any such concerns for a pupil, direct contact will be made with the Child Protection Co-ordinator of the school involved, to agree how the concerns are going to be addressed. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will notify the Headteacher. The Safeguarding Manager will thereafter notify the SQA that the concerns are being addressed and establish whether any additional information is required regarding the outcome.

## **2.10 Information Sharing within School or ELCC Setting**

We know that children and young people expect us to think carefully about how we share information about them (*The Children's Charter*). Sensitive information sharing within a school or ELCC setting is important in ensuring children's expectations are met, that they get the help they need when they need it (*Standard 1*) and that staff are supported.

While it is essential that information is brought to the attention of the Child Protection Coordinator from a wide range of sources, schools and ELCC settings must consider carefully which staff are informed of investigations or action concerning a child or young person. However, it is appropriate to ensure all staff are aware when a child may need extra care and support, without necessarily providing full details of why this is required.

Other staff may require more limited information to help them deal sensitively with children and young people in different situations (e.g. changing for physical education, lateness).

It is appropriate that any member of staff who first reports concerns receives feedback, is assured that appropriate responses will be made by the school and is helped to feel that they were right to share their concerns.

## **2.11 Supporting pupils involved in Child Protection**

Staff need to be able to anticipate children's support needs when they are experiencing, or have experienced, traumatic events or are coping with the processes that follow after a disclosure or allegation.

There are a number of further areas schools and ELCC settings may wish to consider and key to these is knowing and understanding the children as individuals.

They should be willing to support a child's own choice of staff to support them. This may not always be the staff with most experience in child protection and pupil support. The Child Protection Co-ordinator should guide and support the chosen member of staff.

A child may change their mind about who they want to support them, and the level of support they want. This should be respected too – children should feel as much in control as possible about who hears their story in interviews and meetings.

A child or young person may not know how to handle subsequent daily interaction with staff who know intimate details about their experiences. Pupils may be unsure about whether all staff now know these details. These issues could be discussed openly with pupils able to express their feelings about it, to prevent a pupil worrying or having suspicions.

Children and young people may require time and space to reflect and will not always appreciate being reminded that staff are there to support them. They may wish to be allowed to forget. Staff should be prepared to let children and young people make the move to approach staff for support and trust that they will know the support is there if, and when, they want it.

Children may resent “supportive” approaches by staff, no matter how well meant, when they are with their peers and in the public environment of the classroom, corridors and playgrounds.

## **2.12 The Child’s Plan**

The identification of a child protection concern in a school or childcare setting means the child concerned has specific needs and action may be required to minimise the impact of neglect or abuse.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator, in conjunction with relevant staff, should identify what help the school or childcare setting itself can provide for the child to meet their needs, how this will be done, how the situation will be monitored and to whom further concerns will be reported, providing a focus for immediate action and subsequent review.

If a child’s name is placed on the Child Protection Register, this action plan should be integral to and inform any inter-agency child protection plan.

For further guidance in relation to Child’s Plan, refer to Dumfries and Galloway’s GIRFEC Practitioner Guidance.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dgchildrensservices/resources-for-professionals/338-2/>

## **2.13 Recording Information, Chronologies and Maintaining Records**

Whenever concerns arise about any child, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should ensure that a chronology, summarising significant events or incidents regarding the child, is started. This can be used to record positive events as well as those causing concern.

The basis of sound evidence is careful observation and good record keeping. Management of child protection information on SEEMiS:

The Education Services MISS team is notified of all children who are placed on the Child Protection register. This information is uploaded to a secure folder on the pupil's record. The content of the record is then edited to reflect that there is now a Child Protection concern. The MISS Team notifies Headteachers that an update has been made and they can then view the documents from within their system.

Sound recording mechanisms require the following:

- any disclosure should be recorded as soon after the event as possible and within the same working day;
- the record should be dated;
- as far as possible children and adults should be quoted verbatim;
- summarising should be avoided;
- events should be described objectively;
- where notes refer to further action, outcomes are clearly recorded and dated.

Such information must be kept securely.

In most instances the Child Protection Co-ordinator will ensure that this information is recorded in SEEMiS Click + Go in the Significant Events area of Pastoral Notes. Any hard copies of files or documents should be uploaded to the Wellbeing Application within SEEMiS with restricted access, and referenced in the Pastoral Note.

A flagging system should be adopted e.g. a coloured dot attached to the exterior of a file to ensure that staff looking in the pupil's main file (PPR) can identify that confidential child protection information exists.

It is not recommended to store this type of information within your Teachers' Community in school unless there is restricted access to the folder. It is not appropriate to password protect documents in this area as other staff may not be able to access key information in your absence.

## CHAPTER 3: ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

A flow chart outlining the stages of this procedure is attached as Appendix 3.

Relationships between staff and pupils in our schools are overwhelmingly positive and based on mutual respect. Occasionally, however, information may come to light or allegations may be made against a member of staff about inappropriate conduct towards one or more pupils. In an effort to avoid this, staff should be alert to the need to ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times.

It is vital to both staff and pupils that any action taken in response to information or allegations is conducted properly and promptly in order to support thorough investigation if this is necessary. Rumours and gossip can be damaging to the school, pupils and staff unless treated seriously and dealt with properly.

It is also essential that a decision is taken **in the earliest stages as to whether the matter requires to be addressed as a child protection or criminal matter.**

A child's involvement in any discussions or investigations must be very carefully handled. Whilst sufficient information will have to be gained from the pupil to judge the seriousness of the concerns and to enable senior managers to make informed decisions, detailed interviewing of the pupil is not appropriate at this stage. This may require to be carried out by police officers, and sometimes social workers, if the matter is deemed to be one of criminality or child protection.

Whenever a Child Protection Co-ordinator or Head Teacher has to consider such a matter, a level of professional judgement will be required, as in all instances where child protection concerns arise. If a situation should arise whereby personal relationships or other circumstances may mean that making impartial judgments and decisions might be difficult, advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager who will advise how to proceed.

One area for consideration should include how you might respond if the same allegation was being made or the same behaviour being conducted by a parent / carer, adult member of the child's family or even any other adult acquaintance of the child. If it would be considered to be inappropriate in those circumstances then the likelihood, is that it is inappropriate in a school setting or a teacher pupil relationship context.

In all allegations against staff where there are child protection concerns, advice must be sought from the Safeguarding Manager or Integration Manager as to whether a formal response is required.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with all other relevant council and Education Services policies and guidance.



### 3.1 Minimising Risk

All staff should consider the appropriateness of their own and their colleagues' behaviour. Staff and pupils alike should feel confident about openly discussing behaviour which they do not like, or which makes them uncomfortable - a positive school ethos helps build a climate of openness where this can happen.

Child Protection Co-ordinators should ensure that all staff have a good understanding of the professional code of conduct expected of teachers and should use this as a guide to all interactions with pupils.

Where a member of staff feels that his or her actions have been or might have been, misinterpreted, they should make a written report to their line manager without delay. In the event of an investigation subsequently being undertaken in response to this or any future allegations, this report will form part of the investigation.

A number of day-to-day activities in schools should be considered by staff in relation to approaches to helping and supporting pupils to meet their needs, e.g.:

**Private meetings with pupils** – If one-to-one meetings are necessary, they should take place in a room with visual access or with the door open.

**Physical contact with pupils** – This is likely to occur as part of personal care of children and young people with disabilities, or through reassurance or comfort when a child is distressed. Contact should be minimal and respectful of the child's comfort and preferences.

**Physical Education/ Music Instruction** – Where staff support movement or in kinaesthetic teaching, the nature and purpose of contact should be fully explained to pupils beforehand. This type of instruction should be confined, wherever possible, to group settings.

**Changing of clothes** – Appropriate privacy should be provided for older pupils and adult supervision kept to a minimum. Younger children should be encouraged to dress without assistance wherever possible. Changing areas should be arranged to ensure the dignity and privacy of children and young people and appropriate separation of males and females. Supervision of changing areas should be carefully managed for children and young people of the opposite sex to the teacher.

**Relationships** – If a staff member is concerned that a pupil has feelings for them beyond the bounds of a professional relationship, they should seek the advice of a senior colleague, the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Head Teacher.

**Restraint** – When necessary to protect the pupil or others from harm, and always as a last resort (after other attempts to de-escalate or defuse a situation), it may be necessary to physically intervene with a pupil. If so, the minimum force necessary should be used and, if possible, another member of staff should witness and assist.

Where staff are required to physically restrain pupils on a regular basis they should receive regular and specialised training. Education Services staff use the Team-Teach approach - a whole-setting holistic approach to managing difficult, disturbing and sometimes dangerous behaviour.

All incidents of restraint should be logged - dated and signed - in a log kept specifically for that purpose.



**Verbal banter** – Positive relationships between staff and pupils can often involve humour. Staff should, however, be aware that there is a fine line between remarks perceived as fair and humorous and those which are felt to be hurtful, humiliating and embarrassing.

### 3.2 Allegations against staff arising from within the school (staff employed by Education Services)

1. If any member of staff receives information or hears of an allegation of abuse against or inappropriate conduct by another member of staff, the Headteacher and school's Child Protection Co-ordinator must be informed immediately. Together they must give consideration as to whether the information may be of a child protection nature. Where the information or allegations concern either the Head Teacher or the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator, these should be referred directly to the Integration and Inclusion Manager, Safeguarding Manager, Head of Education, or Director, Education and Learning.
2. Information held within the school pertaining to the child should be reviewed to ascertain whether the child is Looked After, has/or has had their name placed on the Child Protection Register, has current social work involvement or has any kind of vulnerability. The child's chronology should be reviewed.
3. If it is considered that the allegation may be of a criminal or child protection nature, the Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator must notify the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager; in their absence they should follow the Escalation Process of availability as referred to on the Flow chart in Appendix 3. The Head Teacher must record discussion, decisions, actions and outcomes. Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager will record centrally.
4. If the concerns have been raised with any other member of central staff, that Officer should liaise with the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager at the earliest possible opportunity.
5. The Integration and Inclusion Manager or Safeguarding Manager will liaise (with the Director or Head of Education) and with a Police Supervisor (Detective Sergeant or Detective Inspector) within the Concern Hub of Dumfries and Galloway Police.
6. A decision will be reached jointly as to what further action should be taken.

There are likely to be three main pathways for action:

- internal investigation and action within Education Services which may or may not lead to disciplinary measures;
- a single-agency Police Inquiry;
- a joint Child Protection Inquiry.

1. If a joint Child Protection Inquiry is decided upon, child protection procedures will be implemented. The Integration and Inclusion Manager will notify the Head of Education and Director, Education and Learning, and where appropriate, the Chief Social Work Officer who will identify a Senior Manager to convene and chair a Strategy Meeting to plan and co-ordinate enquiries.  
Human Resources should be notified at this stage and included in planning and decision- making around any employment issues.
2. The members of the Strategy Group should reconvene at the end of the Child Protection Inquiry to consider the outcome and what further action might be required.
3. Consideration must also be given as to whether the behaviour alleged or giving cause for concern may place any children related to the member of staff at risk, giving particular attention to those living in the same household. If this is thought to be a possibility, a separate Child Protection Inquiry under child protection procedures should be initiated.  
This may be at the end of the initial Child Protection Inquiry, or because of the nature of the concerns, run parallel to it.
4. Where such an allegation is made about a member of staff, in addition to taking appropriate action in accordance with child protection procedures, the Head Teacher should make a full record of the discussion, decisions, actions and outcomes and enter this signed and dated in the school's record maintained for that specific purpose.  
This Record must be stored securely.

### **3.3 Issues to be considered**

When planning and co-ordinating an investigation, either internally or as a criminal or Child Protection Inquiry, Education Services must consider the following:

- whether it is necessary to remove the member of staff from contact with children or from the establishment, without prejudice, for the duration of the investigation;
- whether a communication strategy should be developed to consider information sharing issues within the school in relation to pupils, parents and staff;
- The Head Teacher and Child Protection Co-ordinator should consider the support needs of any child/children involved.

Support for the staff member should also be arranged at this stage.

If a criminal inquiry is being undertaken, any investigation by Education Services will be put on hold, pending the outcome of the criminal inquiry.

### **3.4 Subsequent Action in relation to criminal and child protection inquiries**

When, as a result of a criminal inquiry, there is felt to be insufficient evidence for prosecution, or if prosecution does not lead to conviction, the local authority should conduct their own investigation

and may still consider disciplinary action against the member of staff. In these circumstances, the council's policy should be applied.

In relation to any disciplinary hearing the local authority will take legal advice before asking any child to repeat his/her testimony.

If disciplinary action results in dismissal or if the prosecution leads to a conviction and subsequent dismissal, the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) and the Scottish Executive will be notified, the latter in accordance with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.

### **3.5 Allegations against staff not employed by Education Services**

When concerns are raised regarding a member of staff who is not employed by Education Services, e.g. janitorial, catering, CLD, AMEY etc. the following procedure should be followed.

N.B. This includes members of staff employed by organisations other than the local authority. The procedure to be followed by the Head Teacher is similar to the one outlined above, i.e. the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager should be contacted and they will liaise directly with senior management and police.

In addition, however it is critical that the staff member's line manager is involved at the earliest possible stage. The Headteacher should discuss this with the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager and agreement reached as to who will liaise with the staff member's line manager.

If there is a delay for whatever reason, in contacting the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager, the Headteacher should contact the staff member's line manager directly and explain the circumstances.

The Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager will liaise with the Director or Head of Service and with a Police Supervisor (Detective Sergeant or Detective Inspector) within the Public Protection Unit of Dumfries and Galloway Police.

A decision will be reached jointly as to what further action should be taken and as above, there are likely to be three main pathways for action:

- internal investigation and action within the local authority which may or may not lead to disciplinary measures;
- a single-agency Police Inquiry;
- a joint Child Protection Inquiry.

A senior manager responsible for the staff member should be notified of the decision at this stage and included in planning and decision-making around any employment issues.

For local authority employees, Human Resources should also be involved at this stage.

For staff members not employed by the local authority, their employing organisation's own policy should be implemented at this stage but co-ordination and communication between the local authority (via the Head Teacher and Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion

Manager) and the employing organisation is critical and where at all possible this should include meetings in addition to telephone discussions.

Issues for consideration, as above, should be taken into account. When co-ordinating an organisational risk assessment, senior managers from the employing organisation should be involved and this may include representatives from their own Human Resources Department.

### **3.6 Allegations against staff notified to the Police**

There will be occasions when parents/carers make complaints about members of staff directly to the police without raising their concerns with the school or education authority in the first place.

Normally, under these circumstances, the police will encourage the complainer to discuss their concerns with the school or a senior manager within Education Services but where parents stress they want to pursue a complaint, a flow chart of the procedure as agreed between Education Services and Dumfries and Galloway Police is attached as **Appendix 4**.

## CHAPTER 4: MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

### 4.1 Contributing to Child Protection and Multi Agency Meetings, Decision-making and Planning

It is of critical importance that school and childcare staff are actively involved in decision-making and planning for vulnerable children and young people. Schools and childcare staff will know these children well and are likely to spend more time with them than any other professional – their views, perspectives and knowledge of the child are therefore invaluable to effective planning for better outcomes.

### 4.2 Preparation

If a member of staff other than the Child Protection Co-ordinator is going to attend a multi-agency meeting, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should assist with the staff member's preparation. This will require the gathering of all relevant information (see below) and consideration of how this can best be presented to the meeting.

This process may involve discussion with other members of the staff team to ensure the best available information is included.

Prior to Case Conferences, Review Case Conferences and Core Group Meetings, records including chronologies should be reviewed and analysed and a summary of these presented to the meeting. (Appendix 8 overview of Child Protection Process).

### 4.3 Attendance

It is crucial that school staff are able to attend any planning meetings for children and even more so when these involve children and young people who may be in need of protection and safety planning.

Whilst it is recognised that there may be staff and resource difficulties with this, the purpose of such meetings is to ensure quick and effective responses to children who have already been identified at risk of harm and any delay may incur further risk.

When an invitation is received, the Head Teacher and Child Protection Co-ordinator should decide on which member of staff should attend the meeting. Selection of the most appropriate staff member should take into account:

- first-hand knowledge of the child and their family;
- confidence to be able to speak within a multi-agency setting, often in front of parents;
- an ability to present balanced information in this setting, including strengths, risks, the child's resiliencies and vulnerabilities;
- an ability to listen to multi-agency information and make clear recommendations based on this;
- the ability to ensure that decisions reached, and plans made, are communicated and implemented within the school or childcare setting.

If the staff member is inexperienced at attending such meetings, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should ensure they are familiar with the process and what to expect - and what is

expected from them. It may be appropriate under these circumstances to contact the Safeguarding Manager or the Conference Chair who will be happy to discuss any concerns or queries that the staff member may have directly with them.

#### **4.4 Information about the child and family**

Information regarding children should be gathered and prepared prior to any multi-agency meeting. Usually, this will have been done in advance to complete a report for the meeting. Report templates will generally be the Child's Assessment Report (CAR) which revolve around the three dimensions of the child's life as depicted by the 'My World Triangle'.

Information should be comprehensive and present the child within the context of their circumstances – if the meeting is a Child Protection Case Conference this should not just be focused on the incident or concerns which have led to the meeting being convened. As a general guide the following kinds of information are helpful to decision-making and planning.

Information should, where possible:

- go beyond, but include, attainment and achievement;
- cite the child or young person in the context of their environment and needs;
- consider the child's all-round presentation, including behavioural, physical, social and emotional;
- consider parents' presentation;
- include observations of parent/child interactions;
- detail attendance and routine;
- outline child's relationship with peers/other adults;
- consider the child's quality of life outside school, including any hobbies and interests;
- include any information on additional support needs and how these are met;
- sum up strengths/protective factors - of child, carers and environment;
- sum up vulnerability/risk factors - of child, carers and environment.

Lists of chronological events or incidents are important, but it is crucial that these should be made sense of during the preparation stage prior to the meeting.

Chronologies should not be attached to assessment reports or presented to other agencies in meetings but should be used as a tool to assist in the assessment and analysis of the school held information. If schools are asked to contribute to an Integrated Chronology they should not, by default, send all pastoral notes, but rather consider which entries from their chronology are relevant, and provide these to Social Work on the integrated chronology template.

Where it is likely that planned inter-agency child protection meetings will occur during periods of school closure, the Child Protection Co-ordinator will make arrangements with the child's Lead Professional (allocated Social Worker), to ensure that school information is shared appropriately to allow for considered decisions to be made.

## 4.5 Decision-making

The staff member attending the meeting should take into account all the information presented by other agencies and parents and use this as a basis for making clear recommendations which should, in turn, contribute to multi-agency decision-making.

At Child Protection Case Conferences, recommendations should demonstrate an understanding of the analysis of risk, assessment of need and thresholds required for registration and should be related to an analysis of inter-agency information presented.

The ultimate decision to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register is an executive decision by the Child Protection Conference Chair. If anyone including the child or parent, attending the conference does not agree with the decisions made, they can have their dissent/challenge of the decision-making and outcomes recorded within the minute of the conference. The chair must bring the dissent/challenge to the attention of the Senior Manager, Children and Families, Social Work immediately and agree a course of action. The Senior Manager should respond in writing to the dissenting person within 28 days

## 4.6 Child's Plan

When representing the school or childcare setting at a multi-agency meeting, the staff member should be able to outline the role the school or childcare setting will play in supporting the child (and their family if appropriate). This role should focus on academic, emotional, behavioural, social and safety needs and should be linked to the Wellbeing Indicators. Any plan for a child should ensure there is a focus on achieving better outcomes for the child with clear steps in place to measure progress. More detailed information about care planning can be found in Dumfries and Galloway's GIRFEC Practitioner Guidance, (see Outcome Planning section 11).

It may be helpful or necessary for the information from the multi-agency meeting to be translated into a school specific plan for the child with assistance from the Child Protection Co-ordinator and staff team (see *Child's Plans, Part 2*) and linked directly to the child's identified needs. The plan should contain details of measures to be taken to address these whilst the multiagency Child's Plan will provide a summary of these.

## 4.7 Debriefing

Prior to the meeting, the Child Protection Co-ordinator or Headteacher should ensure there are debriefing arrangements in place to meet with the staff member shortly after their return.

The purpose of this is to ensure that:

- the staff member has an opportunity to 'debrief' and discuss any difficulties which may have arisen for them during the meeting;
- the plan agreed at the meeting and any actions for the school or childcare setting are recorded and implemented immediately.



## **4.8 Children's Hearings**

Whilst any member of the public can make a referral to the Reporter if they believe a child may be in need of compulsory measures of supervision, in Dumfries and Galloway the expectation is that any such referral from a school will be as an outcome of a multi-agency Child's Plan Meeting whereby the school can evidence that all steps have been taken alongside partner agencies to meet the child's needs on a voluntary basis.

## **4.9 Providing Reports to the Reporter**

Once the Reporter receives a referral, they can decide whether to investigate further or not; they have to make a decision of whether there is sufficient evidence and whether they believe the child is in need of compulsory measures of supervision.

The Reporter may request a report from the school on the educational progress and welfare of any child of school age.

If the Reporter makes a decision that the child may benefit from compulsory measures, they will arrange a Hearing. The report provided for investigation purposes will be given to the Hearing although sometimes additional information may be requested.

Once a child has been to an initial hearing, further reports will be requested for future Hearings. Earlier school reports are not retained in the Hearing papers. It is therefore important to summarise any strengths and areas for improvement.

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the report is completed by the person who knows the pupil best and returned to the Reporter within the stipulated timescale. The report should provide as full a picture of the child as possible.

If a Hearing is arranged, generally parents and very often their carers will receive a copy of all reports.

Children over the age of 12 will also see these reports and children aged 8 – 11 can request the reports. It is important that the statement by report writer is completed so if information is not to be shared with the child this is made clear and stipulated.

Each hearing will discuss all reports submitted and staff are likely to be asked to discuss this.

## **4.10 Attending a Children's Hearing**

The Reporter will request a report and attendance at a Children's Hearing to discuss their report and their views on the child.

There will be three panel members, who must be of mixed gender and age. One of the panel members will chair the Hearing. The panel members make the decision about compulsory measures and any conditions attached.

The child must usually attend, and the parent, with any representatives they choose to support them. This may be a friend or family member, but there may also be a legal representative.

If a child or parent does not understand or they don't agree with the reasons for a hearing – grounds for referral, then a Sheriff has to decide whether the case is established and should be referred to a future Hearing.

The Hearing is meant to be conducted in a child friendly manner, in an informal room. If the child is uncomfortable or distressed by the presence of other representatives, then they may be asked to leave while the child gives their views. However, the chair of the panel will then explain what has been discussed when the representatives return.

At times children's attendance can be dispensed with by a hearing, if there is good reason why they should not attend a hearing.

Any school staff invited to attend a Hearing should ensure that they are well prepared with up-to-date information on the pupil's attendance, achievement and behaviour and attitude in school (see 'Information' – above). They should be prepared to give a well-considered and objective view on any aspects of the pupil's emotional and physical wellbeing in school, as well as any educational issues

#### **4.11 Court Proceedings**

If the grounds are to be proved at the Sheriff court, authors of reports and any additional educational staff who are relevant may be cited as witnesses to give evidence in court. The reports could also be shared with the Sheriff. If the reporter requires this then they will contact the staff members to discuss in more detail prior to the court date.

Lawyers supporting parents may also cite agencies to attend court as their witnesses.

Once a decision is made by a Hearing the relevant persons and child can appeal the decision to the Sheriff. At this point all the reports given to the Hearing will be shared with the Sheriff and again authors and other educational staff may be asked to attend Court.

If there are any questions regarding these proceedings, you can either speak with Social Work Services or call the Reporter direct.

The following website is an excellent resource [www.scra.gov.uk](http://www.scra.gov.uk)

## CHAPTER 5: SUPPORTING STAFF AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### 5.1 Supporting Staff

Staff who become closely involved in child protection matters, contribute to decisions that make a profound impact on the lives of children and whole families. At times, staff may feel a strong emotional response including guilt, anger, frustration, despair and doubting of their suitability for the profession.

Since it is often children who choose which member of staff they will disclose information to, it may be younger and inexperienced staff that children and young people will approach. Child protection training will remain abstract until the reality of a child's experience of abuse or neglect is presented to them in living reality.

Staff welfare and support systems must be in place to help staff cope with this.

In addition, there are a number of issues which should be taken into consideration:

- Key staff supporting children and young people may feel a strong attachment to the case. The member of staff may later be rejected by the child or may feel displaced by other professionals who take on a statutory or support role. Good de-briefing for staff involved with children will help this to be discussed;
- Staff should always be allowed to set their own limits on what support they feel able to provide to children and to set limits on their level of involvement in child protection proceedings. Even where a child has approached them for support, staff should feel confident to defer to other staff, and should never feel under pressure to become involved in situations where they feel out of their depth;
- Staff may support children to attend Hearings, Reviews or may attend case conferences, in which they may hear information about children and families that they were previously unaware of, and which is traumatic for them. Good de-briefing must be arranged for staff following their involvement (see 'Debriefing', Chapter 4);
- Many adults have experienced abuse in the past, which they may not have come to terms with. School staff faced with the experiences of pupils may become overwhelmed by buried emotions for which they require support and counselling themselves. Some staff may be particularly zealous as a result of their own experiences, for which they should also be provided with support and counselling. Some of these issues may not come to light unless there is good de-briefing for staff as a matter of course;
- Staff who experience health problems following their involvement in cases may have a stress-related illness. Schools and childcare settings should not wait until this occurs to offer support, but should ensure that following any time off, there is an appropriate back to work discussion to consider further support needs;
- The formal expectation by the school of an individual de-briefing for staff following involvement in each stage of a child protection case, helps guard against staff perceiving the seeking of support as stigmatising.

#### **Staff de-briefing should:**

- take place after each stage of an investigation and subsequent action, and at any time afterwards when staff feel the need for it;
- be provided by a consistent member of senior staff, ideally trained for this role;
- involve discussion and be a separate process from reporting and recording;
- allow the member of staff to reflect, express feelings and seek re-assurance;

- be provided, if only briefly, even for those members of staff who say they do not need it. If it is a requirement for all staff, then it will not be stigmatised as only being for staff who are unduly emotional or weak.

It may be helpful to keep a brief record of these meetings.

**Staff welfare and support systems back up the formal de-briefing, and must be:**

- confidential and discreet;
- available for as long as it is required, and may begin sometime after involvement in a case if it is not desired immediately;
- must be presented as a service for both experienced and inexperienced staff, male and female.

Support must not be associated with personal weakness, personal problems or lack of professional skill. It is an aspect of professional development open to all staff. It may be beneficial to be out with school and with neutral and impartial staff.

In schools across Dumfries and Galloway, support for staff in most circumstances will come from the Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator. Peer support arrangements may be agreed within Clusters.

There are various professionals in contact with schools who may be able to provide support. These include:

- Education Officers, Quality Improvement;
- Educational Psychologists;
- Safeguarding Managers;
- Supporting Learners Area Team Managers – for support for learning staff.

If it is felt there may be a need for support independent of line management, this should be discussed with the Head Teacher/Child Protection Co-ordinator who may then approach another agency or colleague on behalf of the member of staff.

Colleagues in Children and Families Social Work are available to aid reflection, evaluation and debriefing on specific cases.

## **5.2 Staff Development**

A training programme alone will not improve and develop child protection practice in schools and childcare settings as the continuous improvement of practice is reliant on a cycle of:

- Continuous Professional Development – a training strategy, informed by and based on
- Robust Child Protection Policies and Procedures, which incorporates critically appraised and relevant research of what works and an evaluation of the implementation of these, supported by
- Robust Performance and Quality Assurance Mechanisms – which inform
- Continuous Professional Development.... and so, the cycle continues.

Continuous Professional Development - Children's Services multi-agency training calendar can be accessed online: [children's services multi-agency learning and development calendar](#)

Training needs and requirements should be identified through the Education GIRFEC Skills Framework and in conjunction with Professional Review Processes.

Single agency training opportunities are available on CPD through Glow [Continuing Professional Development](#).

### **5.3 Performance and Quality Mechanisms / Multi-Agency Child Protection Inspections**

Any policies linked to child protection will be monitored and evaluated in relation to their implementation. This work will be led by the Safeguarding Manager and overseen by the Integration and Inclusion Manager and will feed into the Public Protection Structure where appropriate. However, the role of self-evaluation by schools and childcare settings should not be under-estimated. As well as Child Protection Procedures this will include, policies such as “Underage Sexual Activity”, “Drug and Substance Use”, “School Linked Incidents Involving Offensive Weapons” etc.

Quality Assurance will be measured as part of the Supporting Learners Plan and in accordance with the Safeguarding actions contained within Education Services Plan.

Increasingly, there is a demand to ensure robust performance and quality mechanisms are in place to self-evaluate single- and multi-agency child protection service provision.

The joint inspection of Children Services led by the Care Inspectorate, including inspectors from education, social work, social care, health and the police will carry out the inspection of child protection services.

The purpose of these multi-agency inspections is to determine:

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of services?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

Both self-evaluation and external inspection of services to protect children will focus on the experiences of children and young people and their families, and the impact services have on their lives.

## CHAPTER 6: WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

What is child abuse and child neglect?

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Recognition of Physical Injury
- Indicators of Sexual Abuse
- Indicators of Physical Neglect
- Indicators of Emotional Abuse
- Recognition of Emotional Abuse

### What is child abuse and child neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. It may be acute or involve a long-term pattern of physical neglect, and often children are abused in more than one way.

When the threshold of concern about risk and the need for Child Protection has been reached, the child's name may be placed on the Child Protection Register.

Areas of concern / risk include:

- Domestic abuse
- Parental alcohol misuse
- Parental drug misuse
- Non-engaging family
- Parental mental health problems
- Children placing themselves at risk
- Sexual abuse
- Child exploitation
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Other concern(s)

### **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. For further information, see the section on Fabricated or Induced illness:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052/12#fabricatedillness>

### **Recognition of Physical Injury**

The following indicators should alert staff to the possibility of children having been abused:

## Bruises

- Black eyes are particularly suspicious if: both eyes are black (most accidents cause only one); there is no bruise to the forehead or nose or suspicion of skull fracture (black eyes can be caused by blood seeping down from an injury above).
- Bruising in or around the mouth.
- Grasp marks on arms or chest.
- Finger marks (e.g. you may see three or four small bruises on one side of the face and one on the other).
- Symmetrical bruising (especially on the ears).
- Outline bruising (e.g. belt marks, handprints).
- Linear bruising (particularly on the buttocks or back).
- Bruising on soft tissue with no obvious explanation.
- Different age bruising (especially in the same area).
- Petechial bruising (petechia - a small spot due to an effusion of blood under the skin); tiny red marks on face and especially in or around eyes and neck, also ears, indicating shaking or constriction.
- Most falls or accidents produce one bruise on an area of the body, usually on a bony protuberance. A child who falls downstairs generally has only one or two bruises.
- Bruising in accidents is usually on the front of the body as children generally fall forwards. In addition, there may be marks on their hands if they have tried to break their fall.
  - The following are uncommon areas for accidental bruising: back, back of legs, buttocks (except, occasionally, along the bony protuberance of the spine), neck, mouth, cheeks, behind the ear, stomach, chest, under the arm, genital and rectal area.

**Bites** - these can leave clear impressions of the teeth

**Burns and scalds** - It can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns, but as a general rule of thumb, burns or scalds with clear outlines are suspicious. So are burns of uniform depth over a large area. Small round burns may be cigarette burns.

**Scars** - Many children have scars, but notice should be taken of an exceptionally large number of differing age scars (especially if coupled with current bruising), unusual shaped scars (e.g. round ones from possible cigarette burns), or of large scars that are from burns or lacerations that did not receive medical treatment.

**Fractures** - Should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and discoloration over a bone or joint. The most common non-accidental fractures are to the long bones (i.e. the arms, legs, ribs). Due to the lack of mobility and stage of development it is very rare for a child under one year to sustain a fracture accidentally. Generally, fractures also cause pain and it is difficult for a parent to be unaware that a child has been hurt.

**Genital/anal area injury** - It would be unusual for a child to have bruising or bleeding in this area.

**Shaken baby syndrome** - Shaken baby syndrome refers to the constellation of non-accidental injuries occurring in infants and young children as a consequence of violent shaking. Occurrence of the syndrome is unrelated to race, gender, socio-economic status or education. Violent shaking can result in death.

**Poisoning** - Poisoning often occurs in Fictitious Illness Syndrome (Munchausen Syndrome By Proxy).



## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

## **Indicators of Emotional Abuse**

In some situations, the following may be applicable to an individual child within the family or to all children:

- Rejection;
- Denigration;
- Scapegoating;
- Denial of opportunities for exploration, play and socialisation appropriate to their stage of development;
- Under-stimulation;
- Sensory deprivation;
- Isolation from normal social experiences, preventing the child from forming friendships;
- Marked difference in material provision in relation to other siblings;
- Unrealistic expectations of the child;
- Asking for a child to be removed from home, or indicating difficulties in coping with a child, about whose care there are already doubts.
- Domestic abuse. The effects on children who witness domestic abuse can be serious. The possibility of such children also being physically abused must be borne in mind (see section on domestic abuse);
- Child's behaviour;
- Frozen watchfulness;
- Fear of carers;
- Refusal to speak;
- Severe hostility/aggression towards other children.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child consented. 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 or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways see also section on child sexual exploitation.

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052/13#exploitation>

## **Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

Physical indicators:

- injuries in genital area;
- infections or abnormal discharge in the genital area;
- complaints of genital itching or pain;
- depression and withdrawal;

- wetting or soiling, day or night;
- recurrent illnesses, especially venereal disease;
- anorexia or bulimia;
- unexplained pregnancy;
- phobias or panic attacks.

N.B. Venereal disease in a child or young person may indicate sexual abuse.

### **General indicators:**

- self-harm;
- excessive sexual awareness or knowledge of sexual matters inappropriate for the child's age;
- acting in a sexually explicit manner, e.g. very young children inserting objects into the vagina;
- sudden changes in behaviour or school performance or school avoidance;
- displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age;
- tendency to cling or need constant reassurance;
- tendency to cry easily;
- regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby;
- distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, a baby-sitter or a lodger; unexplained gifts or money;
- secretive behaviour;
- eating disorders;
- fear of undressing for gym;
- phobias or panic attacks.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from 'non-organic failure to thrive', where a child has significantly failed to reach normal growth and developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated.

In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

### **Indicators of Physical Neglect**

The following indicators, singly or in combination, should alert workers to the possibility that the child may have been abused:

- lack of appropriate food;
- inappropriate or erratic feeding;
- hair loss;
- lack of adequate clothing;

- circulation disorders;
- unhygienic home conditions;
- failure to seek appropriate medical attention;
- a delay or failure in seeking medical treatment which is obviously needed;
- general failure to achieve developmental milestones.

The foregoing recognition and signs should not be used as a checklist or an arithmetical aid or a predictor kit. Using it in this way could be detrimental to children and carers. It is an aid to the exercise of professional judgement and assessment.

## CHAPTER 7: INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

### 7.1 Online and Mobile Phone Safety

The increased use of information and communications technology in society can expose users to risks, including obscene or violent material, bullying or intimidation through e-mails and contact within social media application with adults who wish to exploit them.

A range of specialised guidance is available to schools, these can be found at;  
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

There are centrally provided Council filtering systems in place to protect users from accidental exposure to unsuitable materials. However, teaching staff should carefully plan any use of the Internet to minimise risk to pupils.

In developing their own ICT policy, schools should refer to ICT in Schools Policies and Procedures which can be found at:  
[ICT In Schools Policy & Procedure Overview 2017](#)

#### Mobile Phone Use

A common argument for the carrying of mobile phones by young people is for personal safety. Many parents want their children to be able to contact them if they are in difficulty, or if they change their plans about when they will return home. However, schools, pupils and parents must consider together the rationale for pupils taking a mobile phone to school.

Some of the problems associated with mobile phones in schools may include:

- discipline issues – texting, calling and playing games on mobiles during lessons, assemblies, exams etc;
- bullying – inappropriate texting or calls to other pupils;
- theft – within school, on the way to or from school, or when on school outings;
- photography and filming – these functions can be used inappropriately, such as within changing rooms, recording fights or other incidents, breaching others' safety and privacy.

Schools should use the Mobile Phone Agreement - A Template for Headteachers and Guidance for Staff template which outlines the circumstances in which taking a mobile phone to school is appropriate, arrangements for the safe-keeping of phones during school hours, sanctions for use of mobile phones in school, and agreements on potential confiscation and return of mobile phones if misused should be clear. It outlines arrangements for phone contact with pupils by their parents, and vice versa, during school hours and when away on trips. It also contains a pupil Use of Mobile Phone Agreement template.

[ICT In Schools Policy & Procedure Overview 2017](#)

#### Use of Mobile Phone Images

The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 makes it an offence for anyone to:

- have in their possession an indecent photograph or image of a child or young person under the age of 18yrs;
- take or make an indecent photograph or image of a child or person under the age of 18yrs.

This obviously has implications for any pupils using their mobile phone for such purposes. Whilst this would probably be seen as a bit of "silliness", any such actions could be interpreted

as offending behaviour which could, ultimately, result in a criminal conviction.

Any such conviction would be classified as a 'Schedule 1' offence under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and possibly lead to registration on the Sex Offenders Register which could then have significant consequences in relation to future employment and family life.

Schools should ensure pupils and parents are aware of this, emphasising the potential risks involved, whilst reminding them of current policy regarding mobile phone use within school.

### **Using Images of Children and Young People**

The requirements associated with photographs of children/young people appearing in the media is set out within this policy.

Most images will be used for specific purposes and written consent will have been obtained. Even with written consent, the use of personal details or full names should be avoided, both in captions and associated text. Where a person is named in the text, their identifiable image should not be included.

Personal e-mail addresses, postal addresses, and telephone / fax numbers associated with the persons who appear in the image should not be included.

Activity, group or class photographs should have general labels.

Where an image and the name of the person is to be used, for example the winner of an award, or competition, specific written consent must be obtained.

For children and young people who attend school in Dumfries and Galloway this consent will be sought within the universal school's consent form. Where the person does not attend a school in Dumfries and Galloway, or there is not a record on the Council's central database, consent should be sought using the appropriate form which is included as an appendix within the Digital Image Policy.

Any member of staff who liaises with the media in connection with photographs appearing in the media should be entirely familiar with the requirements of the policy and adhere strictly to them.

The Digital Images Policy can be accessed at:

[ICT In Schools Policy & Procedure Overview 2017](#)

## **7.2 Underage Sexual Activity**

Dumfries and Galloway's Underage Sexual Activity Guidance can be found on the Children's Services website: [Children's Services Website](#)

Individual cases of under-age sexual activity can vary widely, from the possibility of rape or adult coercion to willing and consensual participation in intercourse or sexual activity.

A careful assessment of the situation is important, and it is essential to look at the facts of the actual relationship between those involved. Power imbalances can occur through differences in size, age and development and where gender, sexuality, race and levels of sexual knowledge are

used to exert power. There may also be an imbalance of power if the young person's sexual partner is in a position of trust in relation to them.

To determine whether the relationship presents a risk to the young person, the following factors should be taken into account:

- whether the young person is competent to understand, and consent to, the sexual activity they are involved in;
- whether aggression, coercion or bribery is involved including misuse of substances as a disinhibitor;
- whether the young person's own behaviour, for example through misuse of substances, places them in a position where they are unable to make an informed choice about the activity;
- any attempts to secure secrecy by the sexual partner beyond what would be considered usual in a teenage relationship;
- whether the sexual partner is known by the agency as having other concerning relationships with other young people;
- whether methods used to secure compliance and/or secrecy by the sexual partner are consistent with behaviour considered to be 'grooming' or 'exploitation'.

Consideration should be given to the young person's intellectual, cognitive and emotional development - staff should be aware that children and young people with disabilities are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The greater the age differential the greater consideration should be given to reporting the matter and consideration must always be given to circumstances where the age gap between the older children exceeds 24 months, as per the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009.

An element of discretion is generally used as to whether a situation is judged to be abusive or not. It is recognised, however, that it can be difficult to make a judgement on whether a child is at risk of harm from the limited information available. The danger in any agency making that judgement in isolation is that not all pertinent information will have been assimilated and assessed.

Should the member of staff be doubtful about the young person taking advice, or has other concerns, the matter can be discussed with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or the Safeguarding Manager.

The younger the young person is, the greater the consideration should be given to reporting the matter. **All instances where the sexually active young person is under the age of 13 years should be reported.**

If the Child Protection Co-ordinator suspects that the child may be in need of protection s/he should refer to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and/or the police.

Staff should be aware that children and young people may be at risk of sexual exploitation through prostitution which may involve the provision of sexual services in exchange for drink, drugs, consumer goods or even shelter.

Any such concern should be referred on as a child protection referral.

### 7.3 Young Carers

Many children and young people find themselves in circumstances where they provide significant support to siblings when their parent is incapacitated, where they care for the parent or where they contribute to the care of another family member. For many reasons, parents and children may be reluctant to seek help or let staff know when this happens. In particular, parents may fear losing their children and children may fear losing their parents.

Where a pupil is taking on caring responsibilities, there are a number of issues to be aware of:

- The difficulty may be short term or long term. Parents or the person being cared for may go through 'good' and 'bad' patches of health or mental health;
- The pupil may feel under pressure and extremely anxious about the parent or person they are caring for, and the impact of the situation on any siblings. They may feel very protective of their family and hide the situation as much as they can;
- The burdens of caring may include lack of time to do homework and undertake domestic tasks (sometimes beyond what might be considered appropriate for their age), caring for siblings and taking them to school, managing medication for the person being cared for;
- Pupils may lack the emotional support that healthy and coping parents usually provide; they may lack the time for contact with friends and their social skills may not be practiced;
- Pupils may be absent from school in order to cope with the situation;
- Pupils' own health and wellbeing may suffer;
- Pupils may appear neglected. Where there is a marked deterioration in a pupil's wellbeing, the child's needs for support may lead to a Co-ordinated Support Plan for the child, involving the appropriate agencies in providing support to the child and family. At times, it may be considered that the child has to be looked after away from home for a period of time.

However, it is possible that signs that a pupil has caring responsibilities may be overlooked, unless schools' pastoral care systems ensure good monitoring of pupils and sharing of information between staff. Patterns of unfulfilled homework tasks, lateness or absence, signs of emotional unease, for example, may point to the fact that the child is a young carer.

Early Learning Family Support Officers or Opportunities for All Officers may follow up schools' concerns when there is no immediate fear for the child's safety; staff may consider appropriate enquiries to any schools attended by siblings to gather and share information.

Schools and ELCC should develop and maintain positive relationships with Carers organisations and Young Carers projects, and health services, in order to identify and support children and young people with caring responsibilities.

There are a range of organisations that specialise in supporting young carers who may provide advice to professionals or will offer support direct to the child, in [D&G Young Carers](#).

### 7.4 Self-Harm

Self-harm is any behaviour such as self-cutting, swallowing objects, taking an overdose or running in front of cars etc., where the intent is to deliberately cause self-harm.

Self-harm can be a transient behaviour in young people that is triggered by stresses and resolves fairly quickly, or it may be part of a longer-term pattern. However, there are other factors that



motivate people to self-harm. Even if the intent is not to die, self-harming behaviour may indicate serious difficulties and needs to be taken seriously.

It may be behaviour that is associated with more serious emotional/mental health difficulty. Where there are a number of underlying risk factors present, the risks of further self-harm is greater.

A small proportion of young people who self-harm have a strong desire to kill themselves. However, this is very rare. Though rare, this does not mean that any self-harm behaviour should be dismissed. All attempts of suicide or deliberate self-harm should be noticed, taken seriously and the young person listened to carefully. [Self-Harm Guidance for Schools](#)

## 7.5 Children Missing from Education

Children 'missing from education' are children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not being educated otherwise (at home, privately or in an alternative provision). They have usually not attended school for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks, or considerably less for vulnerable children).

However, each individual case requires a robust initial assessment to be carried out to identify levels of perceived vulnerability, risk and needs.

**In Dumfries and Galloway, we have widened this definition to include pre-school aged children who have enrolled in authority or partner Early Learning Childcare settings (ELCC).** By definition, not attending school or ELCC means all of these children have wellbeing needs around inclusion and achievement. Consideration also needs to be given to other issues in their lives relating to non-attendance. [Children Missing from Education Guidance](#)

## 7.6 Exclusion from school

Children who have suffered abuse or are under considerable stress, may communicate their hurt in different ways, for example by disrupting their classes, damaging property, outbursts and fights or bullying, or by becoming uncooperative or withdrawn.

Prior to any consideration of exclusion, the expectation is that **all efforts at prevention and early intervention strategies will have been exhausted** and appropriate GIRFEC wellbeing assessments and planning will have been undertaken (only in very exceptional circumstances where a very serious incident has occurred will this not be the case).

In line with national expectations, the purpose of exclusion should be seen as enabling schools, children, young people and parents to plan for an effective return to school. **Exclusion should not be regarded as a punishment**, but instead be an opportunity to make changes that will improve the educational experience for the child or young person.

In all cases when considering exclusion, schools should:

- check that there are appropriate arrangements for the care of a child or young person before they are sent from the school premises;

- consider whether there are family or other circumstances that mean support is required if a child is excluded;
- find out whether the child concerned is on a Child Protection Register, or subject to compulsory measures of care, in which case Social Work **must** always be informed;
- undertake a risk assessment to ensure that the child will not be placed at further risk while they are excluded from school;
- where there are child protection concerns, consult the local authority to seek alternative educational provision for the pupil whilst excluded from school or make alternative provision within school – i.e. isolated from peers for remainder of exclusion, without delay;
- consider appropriate arrangements for re-integration into school after the exclusion. For children and young people who have experienced abuse or neglect, stability and consistency in schooling is essential. If an exclusion is necessary, reintegration into the same school is often in the best interests of the child.

Please refer to: [Preventing and Managing Exclusions in Schools](#)

## 7.7 Gypsy/Traveller Children

It is important to be aware of the diversity of lifestyles in Scotland which an inclusive education system must acknowledge and embrace. Gypsies/Travellers have a cultural way of life which is different to that of the majority of pupils, therefore flexibility and solution-focused approaches are essential in working effectively with them. Schools that get to know children and their parents using positive and flexible approaches are in a much stronger position to assess concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing.

Gypsies and travellers generally lack confidence and trust in dealing with authorities and many are reluctant to involve public services in the resolutions of their problems.

While a child is attending school, any concerns should be recorded and responded to appropriately.

Schools should also listen to children and parents, and through positive relationships (as with any other family), build a picture of family links, travelling patterns and the level of stability of current living arrangements (e.g. settled, on a designated site or on an unofficial site). This picture should be recorded and may be helpful when keeping in touch or if tracing children becomes necessary.

If a child has not come to school, and their absence is unexpected, the initial response should be to contact the parent, as with any other child.

Where there is a low level of concern, schools and education authorities should still seek to locate families so that information between schools and services can be shared, to support the family.

Gypsies and Traveller children are often the victims of bullying and harassment. Schools should make it clear to Gypsies and Travellers that they will support all children involved, and that such incidents will be taken seriously. If a school suspects that absence is a result of bullying, home-school link staff or other staff who know the family should contact them.

All staff should be made aware of local procedures for raising a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a Gypsy/Traveller pupil and can contact the Safeguarding Manager or the Area Manager, Team Manager or Supporting Learners, with responsibility for Gypsy and Traveller Families.

Schools and education authorities may find it useful to refer to guidance produced by the Scottish Executive, STEP, and Learning and Teaching Scotland:

<http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/step>

and also *Delivering for Scotland's Gypsies/Travellers*:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/justice/dfsqt-00.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/justice/dfsqt-00.asp)

Please also refer to Children Missing from Education.

## 7.8 Children who are looked after away from home

Child protection concerns are not limited to a child's family circumstances. A looked after child may be placed with kinship carers, foster carers or in a residential setting, young people's unit or respite care service. The potential to abuse a position of trust may increase when children and carers are living together and sharing a home. The main consideration in responding to any concern must be safety of the child. Any looked after child voicing a concern must be listened to and taken seriously.

## 7.9 Bullying

Bullying behaviour may include:

- name-calling, teasing, putting down or threatening;
- ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours;
- physical assault;
- stealing and damaging belongings;
- sending abusive text, email or instant messages;
- making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied;
- targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be.

Such behaviour can leave people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated and can have a devastating and lifelong impact.

Bullying behaviour can take place in schools, children's services, residential services, at home and in the community, at youth groups and out-of-school care and can come from both children and adults. It is also increasingly associated with the use of the internet and mobile phone technologies, especially via social networking sites ('online-bullying'). In essence, the behaviour is the same and requires similar prevention methods.

Bullying behaviour may be related to perceived or actual difference and involve the expression of prejudices regarding, for example, race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. It may be just one manifestation of the prejudice experienced by the child or young person, and/or may

compound other difficulties in their life. With this in mind, vulnerable and marginalised children and young people may be particularly at risk.

For further information see: [Education Services Anti-Bullying Guidelines](#)

## 7.10 Pupil Substance Misuse

Pupils themselves may be involved in drug or alcohol use in ways which impact on their care and welfare. Not all incidents of drug or alcohol misuse involve dramatic intoxication while in school or possession of substances within school. However, schools will still find that drug and alcohol use is an issue requiring a response.

Some issues arise from longer term problems, such as:

- absence from school, or patterns of absence dictated by drug or alcohol use;
- changes in health and emotional wellbeing;
- withdrawal symptoms when drugs or alcohol are not available;
- 'come-down' symptoms after binge use (e.g. at weekends);
- psychosis associated with prolonged and heavy use of psychostimulant drugs;
- social impact on peer relationships following regular intoxication outside school or incidents while intoxicated;
- peer exploitation (or exploitation by others) of young people when intoxicated and deliberate attempts by others to intoxicate those susceptible to this;
- pupils involved in regular drug or alcohol use and intoxication may be in families with little or no parental control or where drug or alcohol use is regarded as the norm;
- the effect of debt on pupils, which may cause them to steal; or may result in the people to whom they owe money hanging around at school gates to receive payment or to threaten the pupils.

For further information and guidance please see:

[Drug and Substance Use Incidents - Guidelines for Schools](#)

## 7.11 Children and Young People who display Harmful or Problematic Sexual Behaviour (PSB)

Harmful or problematic sexual behaviour in children and young people can be difficult to identify. It is not always easy to distinguish between what is abusive and/or inappropriate and what constitutes normal adolescent experimentation.

Where abuse of a child or young person is reported to have been carried out by another child or young person, such behaviour should always be treated seriously and be subject to a discussion between relevant agencies that covers both the victim and the perpetrator.

For further guidance please see Dumfries and Galloway Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB) Risk Management Guidance: [Problematic Sexual Behaviour Risk Management](#)

## 7.12 Domestic Abuse

Children and young people may experience their parent or relatives being abused by a partner. It is estimated that in around 90% of domestic abuse cases, children are in the same room or the next room.

There is also a high risk that children whose parent experiences domestic abuse will also be abused by the perpetrator.

There are a number of signs which indicate the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people, which may include:

- neglect, because a parent is too exhausted (or injured) to care for them or because caring for the child creates more jealousy and abuse
- physical and mental health problems arising from the child's anxiety, distress and trauma
- loss of sleep and inability to do homework which creates difficulties at school
- loss of, or inability to, focus/concentrate on class work within school;
- unusual loss of interest in class work within school
- anxiety about the parent results in clinginess in young children or absence from school in order to stay at home and 'protect' the parent
- anger and frustration: sometimes directed inwardly; sometimes towards peers and teachers; sometimes directed towards abuser and the non-abusing parent.

Schools may be a place of stability and safety for children and young people in contrast to uncertainty and fear at home. However, schools with positive relationships with parents and facilities such as drop-in rooms also provide parents with some breathing space and the chance to access information and services to support their families.

When parents flee domestic abuse, the impact on children and young people may include:

- belongings (including schoolbooks and uniform) being left behind;
- separation from siblings and parent if staying with different relatives or friends;
- children and parent may lose social and/or family networks;
- becoming homeless or staying in temporary hostel, B&B or refuge accommodation where there is little space or privacy (i.e. no room to do homework, keep clothes washed etc);
- attendance at school being disrupted, families may move some distance away making travel difficult or they may fear the abuser will find them if the children attend school;
- difficulties with enrolment in a new school, reluctance to provide details of previous location;
- feelings of isolation as a result of living in fear of being found;
- families being fearful and moving suddenly when the release date of imprisoned abusers draws near.

Schools must consider a range of issues when they are aware of or suspect domestic abuse in a family:

- the risk to the child of direct abuse and/or neglect, or other harm – full child protection procedures may be required;
- the importance of ensuring that abusers are not provided with information on their child or access to their child. Administration staff in particular should be reminded not to disclose information about any pupils to callers (who may pose as professionals) unless their identification can be verified;

- the practical support a child and parent may need if they have to leave the family home suddenly; this may include temporary support with transport, a re-assessment of entitlement to school meals or clothing, re-issuing or loaning lost books or equipment;
- the importance of allocating a key member of staff to support the child and liaise with any other professionals – if this support is long term, to consider a Co-ordinated Support Plan;
- ensuring key staff are aware of difficulties which may arise through disrupted attendance, involvement in court proceedings etc;
- providing relevant information whilst respecting confidentiality;
- supporting the efficient transfer of records, schoolwork and portfolio work to any new or temporary school, if the child has to re-locate.

Every school in Dumfries and Galloway should have a named person who will oversee the sensitive support of children and young people affected by domestic abuse. This may be the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

This member of staff should ensure that all staff are alerted to and aware of the difficulties faced by children in these circumstances and are able to respond effectively.

They should also be sensitive to the possibility that some members of staff may be affected by this and will require additional support.

Women's Aid have children and young people's workers who provide support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Specialist help for children and young people might include:

- Women's Aid Young Persons' Workers: support girls and boys up to the age of 18  
Wigtownshire: 07738997914 or 01776 073104 (24hrs)  
Dumfriesshire and Stewartry: 01387 263052 (24hrs)

Other people who will help:

- Call [ChildLine](#) on 0800 1111 or [start an online chat](#)
- Call Police Scotland on 101 or on 999 in an emergency

Advice and support to help young people keep safe:

- [Disrespect Nobody](#) - information on relationships, sexting, consent, rape and porn
- [The hideout](#) - how to take positive action if domestic abuse is happening to you
- [Right To Ask](#): The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse (Scotland) – DSDAS – gives people the right to ask the Police if their partner or someone else's partner has a history of domestic abuse. Third parties can apply to the scheme on behalf of a person perceived as at risk.

For more information on DSDAS:

- go to <https://www.scotland.police.uk/righttoask>
- phone 101 (the non-emergency number for the police)

Legislation: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/5/contents/enacted>



### 7.13 Children Adversely Affected by Substance Misuse

Schools may have concerns about children's safety and wellbeing arising from the drug or alcohol use of a pupil or their family.

#### Parental problematic alcohol and drug use

Problematic parental substance use can involve alcohol and/or drug use (which can include prescription as well as illegal drugs). The risks to and impacts on children of parents and carers who use alcohol and drugs are known and well researched. Alcohol and/or drug use during pregnancy can have significant health impacts on the unborn child. Problematic parental alcohol and/or drug use can also result in the sustained abuse, neglect, maltreatment, behavioural problems, disruption in primary caregiving, social isolation and stigma of children. Parents and carers with drug and/or alcohol problems often lack the ability to provide structure or discipline in family life. Poor parenting can impede child development through poor attachment and the long-term effect of maltreatment can be complex. The capability of parents/carers to be consistent, warm and emotionally responsive to their children can be overwhelmed by the preoccupation of substance misuse.

Parental problematic alcohol and drug use is associated with a range of potential risks to children. These may include:

- harmful physical effects on unborn and new-born babies;
- impaired patterns of parental care with a higher risk of emotional and physical neglect or abuse;
- chaotic lifestyles, which disrupt children's routines and relationships, leading to early behavioural and emotional problems;
- family income may be diverted to buy alcohol or drugs, leading to poverty, debt and material deprivation;
- unstable accommodation or homelessness as a consequence of anti-social behaviour orders, rent arrears or conviction for alcohol or drugs related offences;
- children having inappropriately high levels of responsibility for social or personal care of parents with problem substance use, or care of younger siblings;
- isolation of children and inability to confide in others for fear of the consequences;
- threat of domestic abuse;
- disrupted schooling;
- children's early exposure to, and socialisation into, illegal substance misuse and other criminal activity;
- parents' reduced awareness or loss of consciousness may place children at physical risk in the absence of another adult who is able to supervise and care for them;
- careless storage of medication and disposal of needles and syringes may cause accident or overdose;
- repeated separation from parents when parents attend detoxification or rehabilitation facilities, or are in prison, or leave children looked after by multiple or unsuitable carers;
- multiple episodes of substitute care with extended family or foster carers.

Those professionals in regular contact with families should be alert to increases in stress, changes in parents' substance misuse or other changes in their circumstances and should consider any potential detrimental impact on their ability to look after children. These changes may signal a need for more help.



Where the school is concerned about familial drug or alcohol use and its impact on a child's welfare and care, issues may include:

- having contact arrangements in place if a parent arrives to collect a younger child and appears too intoxicated to be responsible for them;
- pupils may have caring responsibilities for other siblings or their parent, affecting their own health and wellbeing and their learning;
- pupils may be anxious and concerned for their parent and family and be reluctant to leave the home; or they may reject their family and spend as little time as possible at home. Both scenarios may affect children's and young people's attendance and homework.
- Pupils may feel extremely embarrassed or ashamed of their family situation and offers of information and support must be made sensitively.

Pupils with caring responsibilities should be regarded as having additional support needs and a Child's Plan may be appropriate.

#### **7.14 Children and young people affected by parental mental health problems**

It is not inevitable that living with a parent/carer with mental health issues will have a detrimental impact on a child's development and many adults who experience mental health problems can parent effectively. However, there is evidence to suggest that many families in this situation are more vulnerable.

A number of features can contribute to the risk experienced by a child or young person living with a parent or carer who has mental health problems. These include:

- the parent/carer being unable to anticipate the needs of the child or put the needs of the child before their own;
- the child becoming involved in the parent/carer's delusional system or obsessional compulsive behaviour;
- the child becoming the focus for parental aggression or rejection;
- the child witnessing disturbing behaviour arising from the mental illness (often with little or no explanation);
- the child being separated from a mentally ill parent, for example because the latter is hospitalised;
- the child taking on caring responsibilities which are inappropriate for his/her age.

There are also factors which may impact on parenting capacity including:

- poor coping strategies or misuse of alcohol and/or drugs;
- lack of insight into the impact of the illness (on both the parent/carer and child);
- poor engagement with services or non-compliance with treatment.

This list is not exhaustive. A number of other factors may need to be considered, including the attachment relationship and any instances of domestic abuse.

The stigma associated with mental health problems means that many families are reluctant to access services because of a fear about what will happen next. Parents/carers may worry about being judged and that they will be deemed incapable of caring for their children. Many will therefore view asking for services or support as a high-risk strategy.

Where parents experience mental health problems, their needs may at times conflict with the needs of their child. Staff should bear in mind the importance of putting the child's interests

first. Effective partnership working across services is needed to ensure that children are protected, and their short and longer-term needs met appropriately.

### 7.15 Non-Engaging Families

The terms 'non-engagement' and 'non-compliance' are used to describe a range of deliberate behaviours and attitudes, such as:

- failure to enable necessary contact (for example, missing appointments) or refusing to allow access to the child or the home;
- active non-compliance with the actions set out in the Child's Plan (or Child Protection Plan) contained therein;
- disguised non-compliance, where the parents/carer appears to co-operate without actually carrying out actions or enabling them to be effective;
- threats of violence or other intimidation towards practitioners.

In many cases of child abuse and neglect, this is a clear and deliberate strategy adopted by one of the adults with responsibility for the care of the child.

There is a risk of 'drift' setting in before non-engagement is identified and action taken. If letters are ignored, or appointments not kept, weeks can pass without progress being made. If parents/carers fail to undertake or support necessary actions, this should be monitored, and the impact evaluated.

## Practitioner Portfolio - Working with Resistance

### 7.16 Disability

#### Disability – Children

Children with disabilities are not only vulnerable to the same types of abuse as their typically developing peers, but there are some forms of abuse to which they are more vulnerable. This includes children and young people with a comprehensive range of impairments with physical, emotional, developmental, learning, communication and health care needs.

Increased vulnerabilities/risks to disabled children include:

- an increased dependence on support for communication, mobility, manual handling, intimate care, feeding and/or invasive procedures;
- possible increased parental stress;
- multiple carers, care in different settings (including residential), it is possible that a much larger network can be a risk factor in itself;
- possible reluctance among adults to believe that disabled children are abused;
- an inability to protect themselves from abuse and limited mobility can also add to their vulnerability;
- disclosing can be more difficult for children who have a wide range of communication styles.

#### Disabled Parents and Carers

Children can also be affected by the disability of those caring for them. Disabled parents/carers/siblings may have additional support needs relating to physical and or sensory impairments, mental illness, learning disabilities, serious or terminal illness, or degenerative

conditions. These may impact on the safety and wellbeing of their children, affecting their education, physical and emotional development.

### 7.17 Historical reports of abuse

Historical abuse refers to reports of neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse which took place before the victim was 16 (or 18, in particular circumstances) and which have been made after a significant time lapse. Disclosures of this type may come from an older pupil making reports of abuse in early childhood or perhaps another family member. It may relate to an individual's experience in the family home, community or while they were a looked after and accommodated child in a residential, kinship or foster care setting.

Where schools become aware of a disclosure of historical child abuse, they should follow child protection concerns. This will allow other agencies to determine whether there are any children potentially still at risk from the suspected perpetrator(s).

### 7.18 Female genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is a culture-specific abusive practice affecting some communities. It should always trigger child protection concerns. It includes all procedures which involve the total or partial removal of the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

The procedure is performed at various ages including babies and adolescents but is more commonly carried out on children aged between four and ten years. It is a deeply rooted cultural practice in certain African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities. Justifications for FGM may include:

- tradition;
- family honour;
- religion
- increased male sexual pleasure
- hygiene;
- fear of exclusion from communities.

A range of health problems, both immediate and long-term, are associated with the procedure, and in some cases can lead to death. Short-term effects can include haemorrhage and pain, shock and infection. Longer-term effects include bladder problems, menstrual and sexual difficulties and problems giving birth, and consideration should be given to this during pregnancy through anti-natal appointments.

The emotional effects of female genital mutilation may include flashbacks, insomnia, anger, difficulties in adolescence, panic attacks and anxiety.

FGM is usually done for strong cultural reasons and there is a risk that a child or young person is likely to be sent abroad to have the procedure performed, however, **it should always be seen as a cause of significant harm and normal child protection procedures should be invoked**. Where a child or young person within a family has been subjected to FGM, consideration needs to be given to other female siblings or close relatives who may also be at risk.

[Education Scotland Female Genital Mutilation](#)

Further information can be found at: <http://www.fgmaware.org/>  
[Female Genital Mutilation / Female Circumcision or Cutting - Childline](#)

## 7.19 Honour-based violence and forced marriage

Honour-based violence is a spectrum of criminal conduct with threats and abuse at one end and honour killing at the other. Such violence can occur when perpetrators believe that a relative/community member, who may be a child, has shamed the family and/or the community by breaking their honour code. The punishment may include assault, abduction, confinement, threats and murder. The type of incidents that constitute a perceived transgression include:

- perceived inappropriate make-up or dress;
- having a boyfriend/girlfriend;
- forming an inter-faith relationship;
- kissing or intimacy in a public place;
- pregnancy outside marriage;
- rejecting a forced marriage.

A forced marriage is defined as 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 pressure. A clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage is one in which the families of both spouses are primarily responsible for choosing a marriage partner for their child or relative, but the final decision as to whether or not to accept the arrangement lies with the potential spouses. Both spouses give their full and free consent. The tradition of arranged marriage has operated successfully within many communities for generations.

In Scotland, a couple cannot be legally married unless both parties are at least 16 on the day of the wedding and are capable of understanding the nature of a marriage ceremony and of consenting to the marriage. Parental consent is not required.

The consequences of forced marriage can be devastating to the whole family, but especially to the young people affected. They may become estranged from their families and wider communities, lose out on educational opportunities or suffer domestic abuse. Rates of suicide and self-harm within forced marriages are high.

Some of the potential indicators of honour-based violence and forced marriage are listed below:

- absence and persistent absence from education;
- request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin;
- decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality;
- being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility;
- being prevented from attending extra-curricular activities;
- being prevented from going on to further/higher education;
- self-harm;
- attempted suicide;
- depression;
- eating disorders;
- accompanied to doctors or clinics and prevented from speaking to health practitioners/staff in confidence;
- Female Genital Mutilation;
- truancy or persistent absence from school.

Cases of honour-based violence/forced marriage can involve complex and sensitive issues and care must be taken to make sure that interventions do not worsen the situation. Where this is suspected schools should invoke child protection procedure and in this instance, discussion

should take place with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at the point of telephone referral with regard to any communication with parents. [Forced marriage advice](#) – from Childline.

## 7.20 Child trafficking

Child trafficking typically exposes children under 18 to continuous and severe risk of significant harm. It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and/or receipt of a child for purposes of exploitation. This definition holds whether or not there has been any coercion or deception, as children are not considered capable of informed consent to such activity. It applies to activity **within** a country as well as **between** countries.

Children are trafficked for a number of reasons within and between countries and continents. Forms of exploitation of child victims of trafficking include:

- child labour, for example, on cannabis farms;
- debt bondage;
- domestic servitude;
- begging;
- benefit fraud;
- drug trafficking/decoys;
- illegal adoptions;
- forced/illegal marriage (for further information, see the section on [Honour-based violence and forced marriage](#));
- sexual abuse;
- sexual exploitation.

Child trafficking can be difficult to identify. By its very nature, the activity is hidden from view. Often, children are threatened with punishment if they speak. Also, they may not be aware that they are victims of trafficking.

It is essential to follow child protection procedures timeously where child trafficking is suspected because of the high risk of the child being moved.

## 7.21 Child Sexual Exploitation

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is an often hidden form of child sexual abuse, with distinctive elements of exploitation and exchange. In practice, the sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 might involve young people being coerced, manipulated, forced or deceived into performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities in exchange for receiving some form of material goods or other entity (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gifts, affection). Sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology and without the child's immediate recognition.

In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are often common features.

In some cases, the sexual activity may just take place between one young person and the perpetrator (whether an adult or peer). In other situations, a young person may be passed for sex between two or more perpetrators or this may be organised exploitation (often by criminal gangs or organised groups).

Staff have a responsibility to follow local child protection procedures for reporting and sharing these concerns.

### **Vulnerabilities**

In a high proportion of cases, victims of Child Sexual Exploitation will have one or more social, situational, psychological or physical vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities can include:

- a history of abuse, neglect and/or disadvantage;
- being looked after, or formerly looked after;
- disrupted family life, including family breakdown, domestic violence and/or problematic parenting;
- disengagement from education and isolation from other support mechanisms;
- going missing from home or care environments;
- drug and alcohol misuse;
- homelessness;
- poor health and wellbeing, social isolation, bullying or low self-esteem.

### **Indicators**

Staff should be alert to the possible indicators of sexual exploitation, which are as follows:

- staying out late or episodes of being missing overnight or longer;
- poor attendance at school, regular unexplained absences or a change in pattern of attendance;
- multiple callers (unknown adults/older/young people);
- evidence of/ suspicion of physical or sexual assault;
- disclosure of assault followed by withdrawal of an allegation;
- unplanned pregnancy and/or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs);
- peers involved in sexual exploitation;
- drugs/alcohol misuse;
- isolation from peers/social networks;
- exclusion or unexplained absences from school or college;
- relationships with controlling adults;
- entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothing or other items;
- frequenting areas known for adult prostitution;
- children under 13 years asking for sexual health advice;
- concerning use of the internet/mobile phone.

### **Risks associated with the internet**

There are specific risks associated with the internet in terms of child sexual exploitation, including:

- grooming children on-line for sexual abuse offline;
- children viewing abusive images of children/pornographic images;
- selling children on-line for abuse offline;
- making abusive images of children;
- viewing abusive images of children;
- access to chat lines via the internet or mobile phones;
- sexting.

Where schools are concerned that a young person may be being sexually exploited, they can use the Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework to gather, score and share their concerns with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

[Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework](#)

(Please also see section on Online and Mobile phone safety)



## Non-Disclosure

Young people who are victims of CSE rarely directly disclose because they often do not recognise their own exploitation. For example, a young person may believe themselves to be in an 'adult relationship' with their abuser. Disclosure of sexual exploitation can be particularly difficult for young people; the sophisticated grooming and priming processes conducted by perpetrators and the exchange element of this form of abuse can act as additional barriers to disclosure.

Other reasons for non-disclosure include:

- fear that perceived benefits of exploitation may outweigh the risks e.g. loss of supply of alcohol, drugs; the 'relationship' and associated 'love' and attention;
- fear of retribution or that situation could get worse;
- fear of violence within exploitative relationship;
- shame;
- fear of not being believed;
- fear of labelling e.g. as a prostitute or gay;
- fear of separation from family;
- loss of control;
- fear of Police involvement and court proceedings.

## 7.22 Fabricated or Induced Illness

Fabricated or induced illness in children is not a common form of child abuse. Although it can affect children of any age, fabricated and induced illness is most commonly identified in younger children.

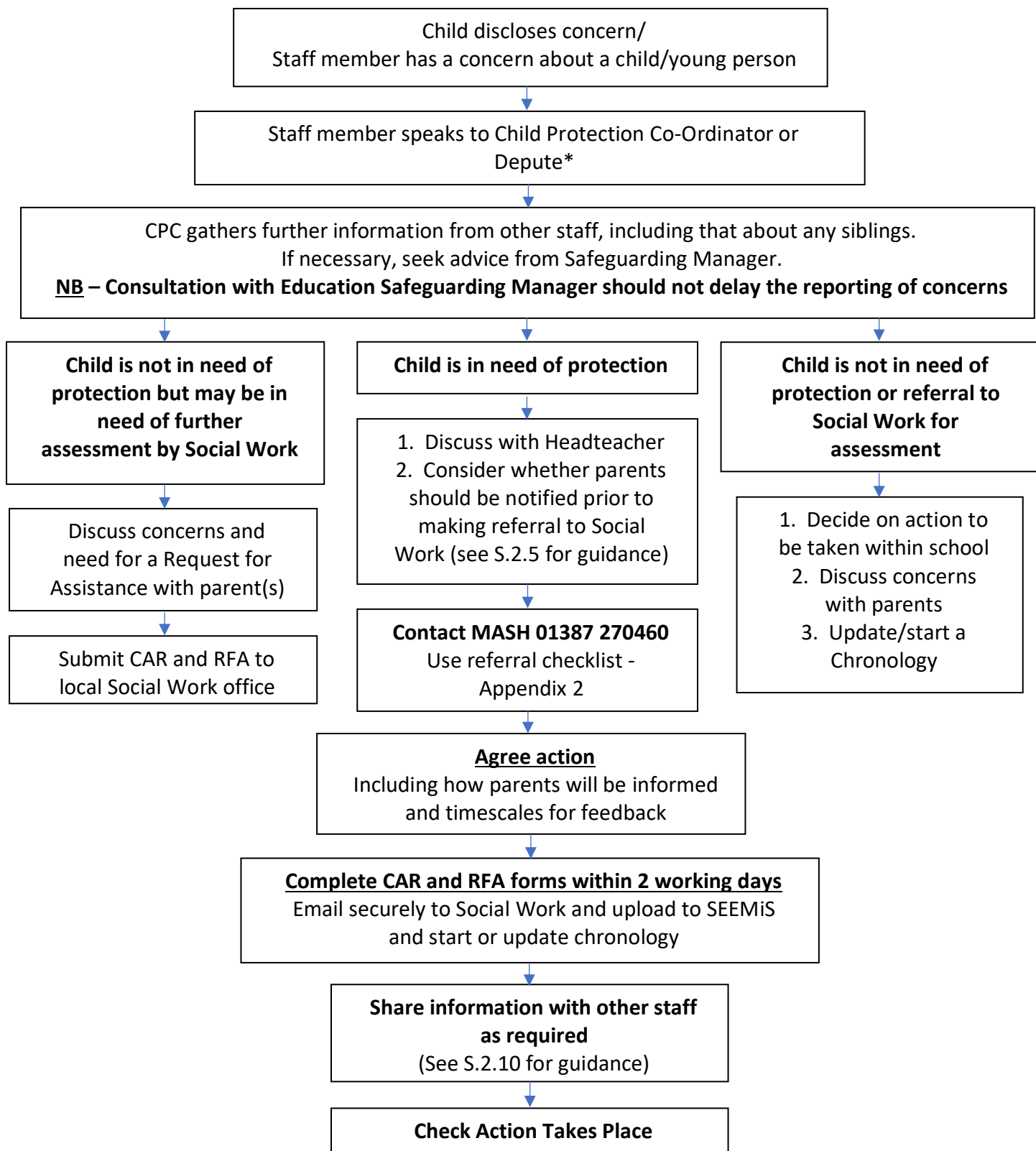
There are three main ways in which a parent/carer can fabricate or induce illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms, including fabricating the child's past medical history;
- fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts, records and specimens of bodily fluids. This may also include falsification of letters and documents;
- induction of illness by a variety of means.

The majority of cases of fabricated or induced illness in children are confirmed in a hospital setting. Fabrication of illness may not necessarily result in the child experiencing physical harm. However, there may still be concern about them suffering emotional harm.



**Flowchart: Child Protection Procedures**



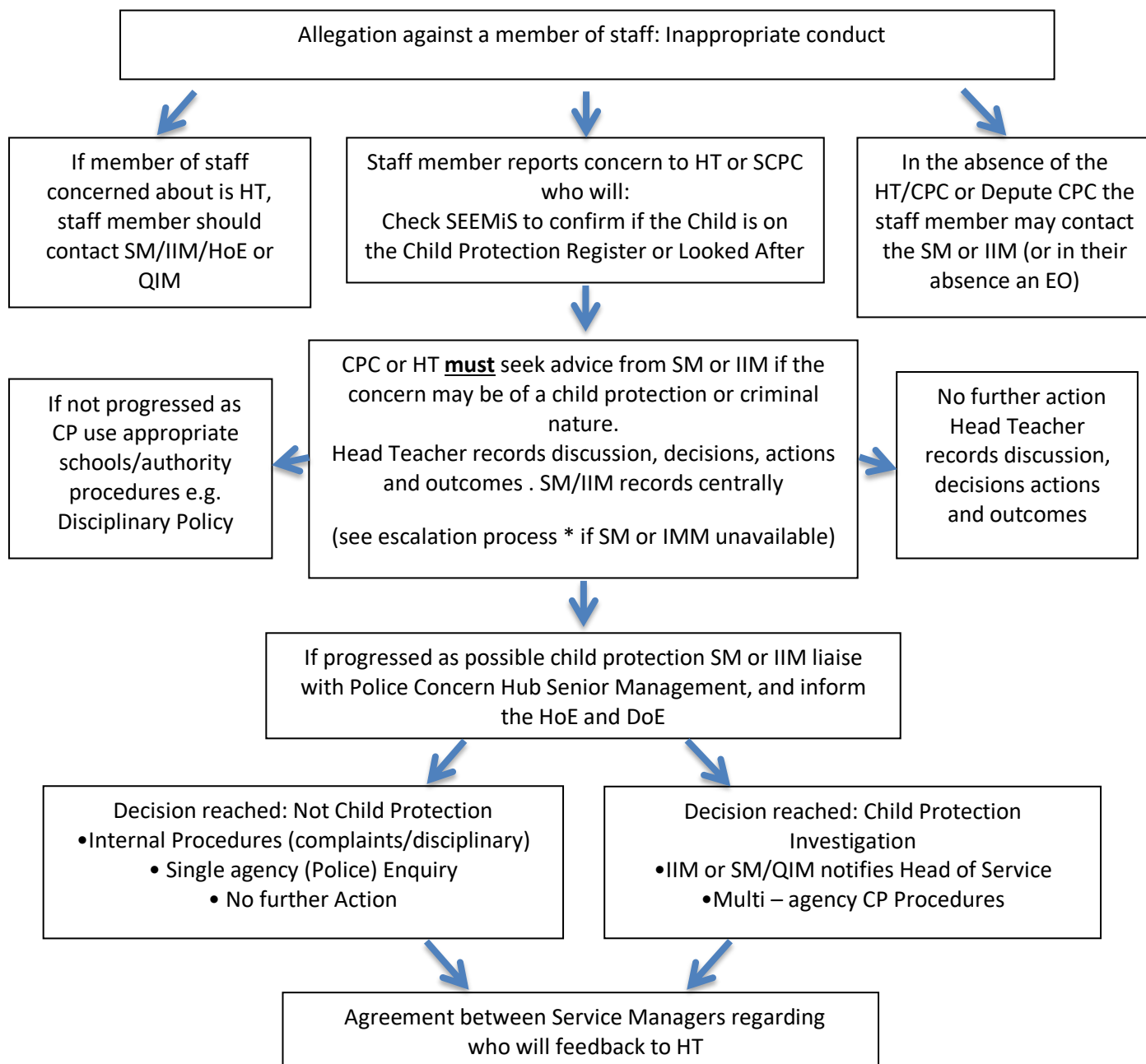
\*Networking - Where a pupil is networking, the staff member will share the concern with the Child Protection Co-Ordinator in the establishment where the concern or disclosure arose or was made. The CPC will then make contact with the CPC or the Depute CPC in the pupils' base school.

## APPENDIX 2

## REFERRAL TO MASH: TELEPHONE REFERRAL CHECKLIST

1. Ascertain the name and designation of the person you are speaking with and state clearly that you wish to make a child protection referral.
2. Identify the child, spelling out their name/date of birth/ address/ parents (carers)/ siblings if known. Inform the MASH if you are aware that the child is staying anywhere other than the address you have provided.
3. Explain clearly the exact nature of your concern about the child – detailing **how**, **when**, **what**, **where**, and **why** you came to be concerned and what action you have already taken. Providing any **additional context**.
4. Explain what you think the **risks**, **protective factors**, **vulnerabilities** and **adversities** are.
5. Provide details of all others who are aware of this information.
6. Establish any immediate action MASH intend to take.
7. Where it has not been appropriate to inform the parents (see 2.5), establish who will inform parents/carers and when this will be done.
8. Check whether the child (and/or siblings) should be collected/dismissed as normal and establish what should happen if this is not to be the case.
9. Check what you are able to say if parent/carer arrives before any action is taken by Social Work / Police.
10. Confirm when you can be expected to receive feedback and from whom – if action is to be taken that evening it is important that you receive feedback by the beginning of the next school day.
11. Establish what further action will be required from the school.
12. Email Request for Assistance and Child's Assessment Report form within 2 working days.

**Flowchart: Allegations Against Members of Staff (Staff Employed by Education Services)**

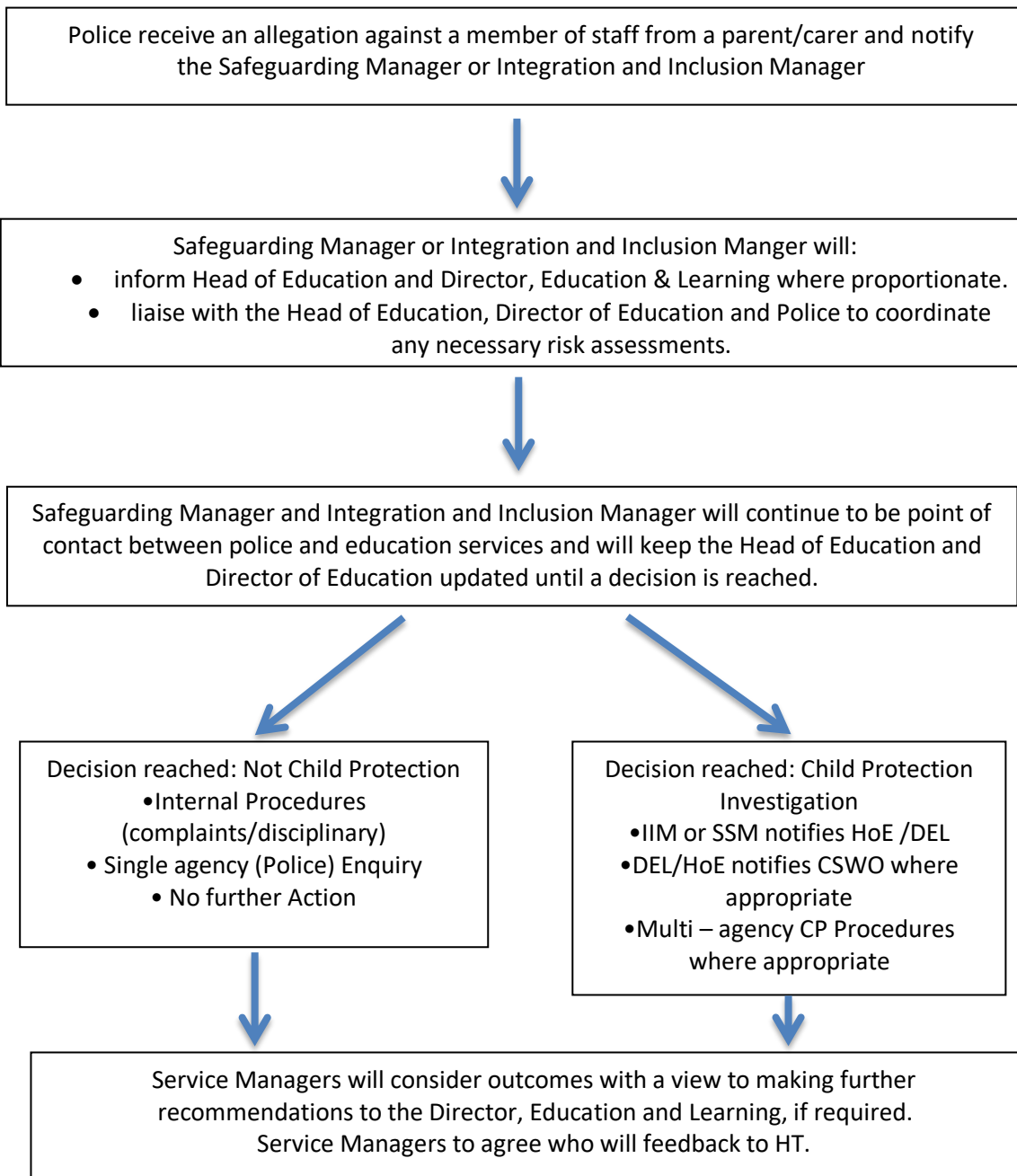


**Glossary**  
 HT- Head Teacher  
 CPC - Child Protection Co-ordinator  
 SM – Safeguarding Manager  
 IIM - Integration and Inclusion Manager  
 EO – Education Officer  
 QIM – Quality Improvement Manager  
 HoE – Head of Education  
 DoE – Director of Education  
 CSWO - Chief Social Work Officer

**\*Escalation process (availability)**  
 Safeguarding Manager  
 Integration and Inclusion Manager (IIM)  
 Head of Education (HoE)  
 Quality Improvement Manager (QIM)  
 Alternative Education Service Manager

APPENDIX 4

**Flowchart: Allegations Against Staff Notified to the Police by Parents**



Glossary  
 HT- Head Teacher  
 SM – Safeguarding Manager  
 IIM - Integration and Inclusion Manager  
 HoS – Head of Education  
 DEL – Director, Education & Learning  
 CSWO - Chief Social Work Officer

Escalation process (availability)  
 Safeguarding Manager  
 Integration and Inclusion Manager (IIM)  
 Head of Education (HoE)  
 Director, Education & Learning

## PROCEDURE FOR SUPPORTING LEARNERS STAFF: RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

If you have concerns about a child, which you feel may indicate they are in need of protection, these are the steps you should follow:

### DURING NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS

1. Speak to the Child Protection Co-ordinator of the school that the child attends and notify your Area Team Manager (Supporting Learners) of your action.
2. Once you have notified the Child Protection Co-ordinator of your concerns, it becomes this person's responsibility to co-ordinate any further enquiries, including gathering of further information and to arrive at a judgement as to whether this child may be in need of protection, requiring a referral to an outside agency (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police). They will direct you on any further action you should take.
3. If the Child Protection Co-ordinator is not available speak to either their Depute or the Headteacher (if different from the Child Protection Co-ordinator).
4. If they are not available, you should contact the Area Team Manager (Supporting Learners).
5. Where none of the above are available you can contact the Safeguarding Manager for advice and guidance. They will advise you of further steps to be taken which may involve contacting Social Work to make a referral.

### OUTWITH NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS

1. If your concerns arise before 5pm you can contact the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager for advice, and s/he will guide you through the steps you need to take next.  
***N.B. - seeking such advice is not the same as making a referral and should not delay concerns being reported to the relevant agencies.***
2. If you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Manager or Integration and Inclusion Manager you should contact Out of Hours Social Work or, if the risk is immediate, Police.
3. If under exceptional circumstances, you are unable to get a response from Out of Hours Social Work, and your concerns are such that you fear for the child's safety you should contact the Police.

### MAKING A REFERRAL

It is important that you write down anything the child has said as soon as possible, including everything that you have said to them. This may prove to be a key source of evidence if the matter subsequently goes to Court.

Information you will be expected to provide if making a referral to Social Work Services or WSSS includes:

- name and address of the child;
- parents'/ carers' details;
- your name, contact details and relationship to the child;
- the nature of your concerns;
- if a disclosure has been made, the exact words the child has used;
- any action you have taken, including what you have said and who else you have spoken to;
- where the child is now;
- if you feel the child is at risk of immediate danger;
- any other family members or family friends who may be able to support the child if required.

## **FOLLOW-UP**

- 1) If you have had to refer a child to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or Out of Hours Social Work or have sought advice from the Area Team Manager (Supporting Learners) outwith normal school hours you should contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator of the child's school at the earliest opportunity the next school day, informing them of any action taken.
- 2) The Child Protection Co-ordinator and you should then complete the Referral Form contained in the local authority's Child Protection Procedures.
- 3) The Child Protection Co-ordinator should contact MASH or Duty Social Work for an update as soon as possible (if Out of Hours handled the referral, they will have passed all information to the relevant Social Work office). They will ensure that you are kept updated if enquiries are ongoing.
- 4) The Child Protection Co-ordinator will plan with you and other relevant staff how the child can best be supported and your role within that.
- 5) It is important that there are mechanisms in place to debrief and support you, either through the Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Area Team Manager (Supporting Learners), therefore it is important that you notify the Supporting Learners member of staff of any referrals you have been involved with.

**CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

**APPENDIX 6**

**Name:**

**DOB:**

**Single Agency Reference No:** SCN

| <b>Date &amp; Time</b> | <b>Source</b>   | <b>Name &amp; Role of Practitioner Recording Significant Event</b> | <b>Significant Event</b>   | <b>Event Details</b>                       | <b>Impact</b>   | <b>Outcome/Actions Taken</b>   |
|------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Self populating</i> | <i>This is where information comes from e.g. Police, Social Work, the person, their family, school...</i> | <i>Name &amp; Role of who is updating the chronology</i>           | <i>Title e.g. Domestic abuse; Child's name placed on Child Protection Register; Achievements</i> | <i>Summary of key points of the event.</i> | <p><i>How does the event affect the child/young person?</i></p> <p><i>How does the child / young person feel about this event? For example, do they feel safe?</i></p> <p><i>Has a similar event happened in the past and is there a pattern?</i></p> <p><i>Has this event increased or reduced the risk to the child / young person?</i></p> <p><i>Will it be important for this event to be considered in the child/ young person's planning?</i></p> | <p><i>What happened?</i></p> <p><i>Who did you discuss this with?</i></p> <p><i>What action did you take e.g. Amended care plan; informed others; Referral to MASH, referral to the Reporter; meeting arranged etc. Please reference key documents.</i></p> <p><i>It is acceptable to put no action was necessary or n/a in this box if there was no follow-on action.</i></p> |



**INFORMATION CHECKLIST**

Information regarding children should be gathered and prepared prior to any multi-agency meeting. Information should be comprehensive and present the child within the context of their circumstances - if the meeting is a Child Protection Case Conference this should not just be focused on the incident or concerns which have led to the meeting being convened. As a general guide the following information is helpful to decision-making and planning and should be recorded on a Child's Assessment Report.

Information should, where possible:

- go beyond, but include, attainment and achievement;
- cite the child or young person in the context of their environment and needs;
- consider the child's all-round presentation, including behavioural, physical, social and emotional;
- consider parents' presentation;
- include observations of parent/child interactions;
- detail attendance and routine;
- outline child's relationship with peers/other adults;
- consider the child's quality of life outside school, including any hobbies and interests;
- include any information on additional support needs and how these are met;
- sum up strengths/protective factors – of child, carers and environment;
- sum up concerns/risk factors – of child, carers and environment.

It is crucial that any chronology of events should be analysed during the preparation stage prior to the meeting.

## AN OVERVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCESSES

### Initial Referral Discussion (IRD)

The IRD is a decision-making process which allows for information to be gathered and shared in order to inform decision making as to whether or not a child is in need of protection.

An IRD is a tripartite discussion that is initiated when a professional has sufficient concerns that they believe these discussions are necessary to consider the safety of a child. These should constitute an initial discussion about the level of concerns and what actions and processes are required to address these.

The three key agencies are Police, Social Work and Health. Where a child is of school age then Social Work has the responsibility to consult with Education in their information gathering. This should be an integral part of the process unless initial information indicates that the concerns are clearly Child Protection.

### Child Protection Case Conferences

Multi-agency Child Protection Case Conferences are an essential feature of inter-agency collaboration to protect children. They enable agencies, alongside parents to identify children's needs, including the need for protection, and to plan for how these needs can best be met.

There are four main types of Case Conferences:

- **Initial Child Protection Case Conference:** considers the circumstances of a child who is not on the Child Protection Register about whom there are concerns about significant harm.
- **Review Child Protection Case Conference:** reviews the circumstances of a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register.
- **Pre-birth Child Protection Case Conference:** considers the circumstances of an unborn child who may be at risk of significant harm at birth.
- **Transfer Child Protection Case Conference:** considers arrangements to transfer cases when a child who is already on the Register of another local authority moves to Dumfries and Galloway, or where a child who is currently placed on Dumfries and Galloway's Register moves to another authority.

Tasks of the Child Protection Case Conference are to:

- discuss and review the child protection investigation;
- share relevant information held by participating agencies and by the family members present;
- summarise and analyse presenting information - identifying areas of resilience and vulnerability, protective environment and adversity;
- establish a view as to whether significant harm has occurred and/or is likely to occur in the future;
- consider whether a multi-agency plan is required to meet the child's needs and whether additional specialist services are required;
- reach a decision as to whether the child's name needs to be placed on the Child Protection Register based on: the level of actual or potential risk, whether a multi-agency plan is required which will be subject to review at Core Group Meetings and subsequent Review Case Conference.

The Case Conference will also:

- consider whether emergency measures are required to safeguard the child;
- through the decisions and recommendations identify the outline protection plan which will be carried forward to the first Core Group Meeting and translated into the full multi-agency Child Protection Plan;

- recommend the need for a referral to the Authority Reporter.

### **Registration and Significant Harm**

No single definition of the degree of concern or level of risk to which the threshold for registration can be applied is given. It will remain a complex matter, subject to professional judgment based on assessment and interpretation of multi-agency information.

In assessing the threshold for significant harm, a number of factors should be considered, including:

- the duration and severity of abuse;
- the actual or potential impact on the child's health, welfare and development;
- the context of any alleged incident, including the child's vulnerability;
- parental attitude and willingness to co-operate with agencies;
- the presence or absence of any protective factors;
- the child's reactions and views.

The decision to place the name of a child on the Child Protection Register should be taken where the level of concern about risk to the child(ren) from future abuse or harm is sufficiently high to require action to ensure protection, including the formulation of a formal written child protection plan.

Registration should be under the primary category that represents the most predominant and serious area(s) of risk from which the child requires protection.

The nature of the 'harm' should be specified in the reasons for registration.

The future risk should determine the category of registration rather than past abuses, if these are different.

All agency representatives attending the meeting need to be prepared, in the light of evidence presented, to make a recommendation as to whether or not a child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register.

A referral by Social Work to the Reporter will always be considered where a child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register.

### **De-registration**

A child's name should only be removed from the Child Protection Register at a Review Child Protection Case Conference and where the detailed multi-agency assessment built up over the period of registration, leads to a multi-agency judgement and conclusion that the risk of abuse has been diminished or eliminated.

This decision will also be informed by the recommendation from the most recent Core Group Meeting where risks, strengths, needs and vulnerabilities will have been taken into consideration and analysis will have been given to the process of the overall child protection plan and the current level of risk to the child.

### **Recommendations**

The Conference will make **recommendations** in terms of:

- the membership of the Core Group and the timing of the first meeting;
- the commissioning of a comprehensive risk assessment to be presented no later than the third Core Group Meeting but always within twelve weeks;
- referral to the Reporter;
- timescales for holding the Review Case Conference;
- any other recommendation in support of the overall protection plan.

## **Child Protection Plans**

All children and young people who are placed on the Child Protection Register in Dumfries and Galloway will be subject to a formal written child protection plan.

When a child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register, the Social Worker who has been named as the key worker will have responsibility for co-ordinating the child protection plan and carrying out specific tasks allocated to them by the Core Group.

The child protection plan will flow directly from the decisions and recommendations from the Initial Case Conference. The full plan will be drawn up at the first Core Group Meeting.

It will clearly state roles and responsibilities of professionals and parents and also include timescales for completion of identified tasks. It should also contain clear expectations about what needs to improve, and the potential implications of improvements not being made.

The plan will be clearly related to the areas of risk as identified by the Case Conference and the roles, tasks and contact with the child and family will be designed to reduce the perceived risk to the child.

## **Core Group Meetings**

The Core Group Meeting is a device for co-ordinating and maintaining inter-agency involvement following registration and for ensuring the implementation of the child protection plan.

Membership of the Core Group should be kept as small as possible without compromising the planning or protective process. Schools and childcare contributions are critical to this planning process as they are likely to see more of the child than any other professional.

The first Core Group will meet either directly following the Case Conference or within 5 working days of this. The purpose of this meeting is to form the full child protection plan with reference to the outline plan recommended by the Case Conference.

Subsequent Core Group Meetings should take place at intervals of no more than 6 weeks to review the plan, and to make any necessary amendments to roles, tasks and Core Group membership.

The Core Group will report back to the Review Child Protection Case Conference and make a collective recommendation regarding the continued need for registration.

## **Changes in Circumstances**

If it becomes clear that the child protection plan is not effective or requires amendments the Social Worker will discuss this with their supervising manager who will consider whether to convene an early Core Group Meeting or take any other action as deemed appropriate.

No changes should be made to the child protection plan without discussion with other Core Group Members.

## CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION HANDOUT FOR ALL STAFF

### PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS, EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTINGS

It is essential that every member of staff accepts the responsibility for the welfare of children and young people so they can be protected from harm. To ensure this in schools and ELCC Settings, all staff must:

- be alert to signs and indicators which suggest a child may be in need of protection;
- listen carefully to any child who approaches them with a concern;
- discuss concerns with the School Child Protection Co-ordinator or ELCC Manager immediately.

All staff in schools and nurseries are in a good position to notice signs or symptoms indicating a child or young person may be in need of protection because of their day-to-day contact. Such signs may be due to a variety of other reasons, including bereavement, or other changes in family circumstances. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

#### PHYSICAL ABUSE

##### Signs or symptoms of physical injury or abuse may include:

- bruises
- black eyes. This is particularly suspicious if: both eyes are black (most accidents cause only one); there is no bruise to the forehead or nose or suspicion of skull fracture (black eyes can be caused by blood seeping down from an injury above).
- bruising in or around the mouth
- grasp marks on arms or chest
- finger marks (e.g. you may see three or four small bruises on one side of the face and one on the other).
- symmetrical bruising (especially on the ears)
- outline bruising (e.g. belt marks, handprints)
- linear bruising (particularly on the buttocks or back)
- bruising on soft tissue with no obvious explanation
- different age bruising (especially in the same area)
- petechial bruising (petechia - a small spot due to an effusion of blood under the skin);
- tiny red marks on face and especially in or around eyes and neck, also ears, indicating shaking or constriction.
- most falls or accidents produce one bruise on an area of the body, usually on a bony protuberance. A child who falls downstairs generally has only one or two bruises.
- bruising in accidents is usually on the front of the body as children generally fall forwards. In addition, there may be marks on their hands if they have tried to break their fall.
- the following are uncommon areas for accidental bruising: back, back of legs, buttocks (except, occasionally, along the bony protuberance of the spine), neck, mouth, cheeks, behind the ear, stomach, chest, under the arm, genital and rectal area

**Bites** - these can leave clear impressions of the teeth.

**Burns and scalds.** It can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns, but as a general rule of thumb, burns or scalds with clear outlines are suspicious. So are burns of uniform depth over a large area. Small round burns may be cigarette burns.

**Scars** - Many children have scars, but notice should be taken of an exceptionally large number of differing age scars (especially if coupled with current bruising), unusual shaped scars (e.g. round ones from possible cigarette burns), or of large scars that are from burns or lacerations that did not receive medical treatment.

**Fractures** - Should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and discoloration over a bone or joint. The most common non-accidental fractures are the long bones (i.e. the arms, legs, ribs). Due to the lack of mobility and stage of development it is very rare for a child under one year to sustain a fracture accidentally. Generally, fractures also cause pain and it is difficult for a parent to be unaware that a child has been hurt.

**Genital/anal area injury** - It would be unusual for a child to have bruising or bleeding in this area.

**Shaken baby syndrome** - Shaken baby syndrome refers to the constellation of non-accidental injuries occurring in infants and young children as a consequence of violent shaking. Occurrence of the syndrome is unrelated to race, gender, socio-economic status or education. Violent shaking can result in death.

**Poisoning** - Poisoning often occurs in Fabricated or Induced illness.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child consented. 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 or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

Physical indicators:

- injuries in genital area;
- infections or abnormal discharge in the genital area;
- complaints of genital itching or pain;
- depression and withdrawal;
- wetting or soiling, day or night;
- recurrent illnesses, especially venereal disease;
- anorexia or bulimia;
- unexplained pregnancy;
- phobias or panic attacks;
- venereal disease.

### **General indicators:**

self-harm;

- excessive sexual awareness or knowledge of sexual matters inappropriate for the child's age;
- acting in a sexually explicit manner, e.g. very young children inserting objects into the vagina;
- sudden changes in behaviour or school performance or school avoidance;
- displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age;
- tendency to cling or need constant reassurance;
- tendency to cry easily;
- regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby;

- distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, a baby-sitter or a lodger; unexplained gifts or money;
- secretive behaviour;
- eating disorders;
- fear of undressing for gym;
- phobias or panic attacks

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

### **Indicators of Emotional Abuse**

In some situations, the following will be applicable to an individual child within the family or to all children:

- rejection;
- denigration;
- scapegoating;
- denial of opportunities for exploration, play and socialisation appropriate to their stage of development;
- under-stimulation;
- sensory deprivation;
- isolation from normal social experiences, preventing the child from forming friendships;
- marked difference in material provision in relation to other siblings;
- unrealistic expectations of the child;
- asking for a child to be removed from home, or indicating difficulties in coping with a child, about whose care there are already doubts;
- domestic abuse. The effects on children who witness domestic abuse are serious. The possibility of such children also being physically abused must be borne in mind (see section on domestic abuse);
- child's behaviour;
- frozen watchfulness;
- fear of carers;
- refusal to speak;
- severe hostility/aggression towards other children.

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from 'non-organic failure to thrive', where a child has significantly failed to reach normal growth and developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated.

In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood



illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

### **Indicators of Physical Neglect**

The following indicators, singly or in combination, should alert workers to the possibility that the child may have been abused:

- lack of appropriate food;
- inappropriate or erratic feeding;
- hair loss;
- lack of adequate clothing;
- circulation disorders;
- unhygienic home conditions;
- failure to seek appropriate medical attention;
- a delay or failure in seeking medical treatment which is obviously needed;
- general failure to achieve developmental milestones.

The foregoing recognition and signs should not be used as a checklist or an arithmetical aid or a predictor kit. Using it in this way could be detrimental to children and carers. It is an aid to the exercise of professional judgement and assessment.

No list of signs can be exhaustive, and it is important to bear in mind that other explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described however, any sudden change of behaviour, performance or attendance should be discussed with the CPC.

It is possible that you may notice some of the above behavioural signs but not know if a child is experiencing a specific type of harm - you still need to discuss this with the CPC who may have more information about the child or young person and so can see the bigger picture.

It is often only when information from a range of sources is put together that a child can be seen to be in need or at risk of harm.

### **Responding to Disclosures**

Pupils often take time to seek out and test adults to whom they wish to disclose abuse or concerns to disclosure is more often a process than an event. If you feel that a child may be preparing to tell you something you should discuss this with the CPC who will provide you with support and guidance.

Make sure you know who you should speak to if your CPC is not in school.

If a child discloses or alleges abuse staff should:

- not promise to keep secrets, whilst explaining the reasons for this;
- listen carefully;
- not show disbelief or panic;
- take the allegation seriously;
- reassure the child or young person;
- avoid expressing your own views on the matter;
- explain that you will have to share the information with someone else (your CPC);
- not question the child – this is the responsibility of Social Work and/or Police as the investigating agencies who are trained in investigative interviewing of children;
- inform the CPC immediately.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) in my school/ELCC setting is:

Staff Name ..... Date .....