



# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

August 2025

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## Introduction and Scope

St Columba's High School is a nurturing and inclusive community, committed to safeguarding every young person through high levels of support, participation, and achievement. We uphold the values of **Faith, Ambition, Inclusion, and Perseverance**, fostering a culture where all children feel safe, respected, and heard.

As a GOLD Rights Respecting School, we promote the UNCRC and Scotland's commitment to children's rights. We also reflect 'The Promise', placing relationships, respect, and children's voices at the heart of our support. We work closely with families, carers, and agencies to maintain a safe environment and protect the wellbeing of all pupils.

This establishment policy operates **within Inverclyde Council's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Education Services Guidance** (March 2025).

## Legislative and Policy Framework

This policy is established in accordance with the following key legislation and guidance:

- Education (Scotland) Act 1980
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023) which can be accessed [here](#).
- Inverclyde Council Child Protection Committee (ICPC) policies and procedures which can be accessed [here](#).

## Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to be protected from harm.
- All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and follow the school's procedures when concerns arise.
- Partnership working with parents, other agencies and child is essential in promoting and safeguarding their wellbeing.
- Confidentiality will be maintained where appropriate, but the welfare of the child will always take precedence. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with Inverclyde Council ICPC policies and procedures and relevant legislation.
- St Columba's High School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children, where they feel listened to and respected.



## Roles and Responsibilities

### All Staff

All adults working in or visiting St Columba's High School have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and related procedures
- Recognise potential indicators of abuse, neglect and harm.
- Be aware of the signs of radicalisation and extremism
- Report any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing immediately to the Child Protection coordinator (CPC) or the Head Teacher
- complete a Record of Concern
- Contribute to a safe and supportive environment for all young people
- Engage in annual CP refresher training and ongoing CLPL.

### Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)

- Strategic Lead on safeguarding; ensure local procedures are followed.
- Decide when to make a Request for Assistance to Social Work and/or inform Police.
- Record concerns robustly as Significant Events in SEEMiS Pastoral Notes and contribute to accurate chronologies.
- Represent Education at IRD's/Planning Meetings or nominate an appropriate member of Pupil Support Staff.
- Quality assure records/chronologies; oversee secure filing and transfer; review access permissions.
- Coordinate staff training; maintain training logs; provide support/supervision; escalate inter-agency delays.
- The CPC for St Columba's High School is Mr Iain McLean

### Principal Teachers of Guidance

- Record concerns robustly as Significant Events in SEEMiS Pastoral Notes and contribute to accurate chronologies as instructed by CPC or HT
- Represent Education at IRD's/Planning Meetings as nominated by CPC
- Regularly review chronologies

### Office/Admin/Facilities

- Know immediate reporting routes and how to contact CPC or HT; ensure visitor processes and CP/PREVENT posters are in place.

### Visiting/Supply/Volunteers

- Read induction information; wear ID; report concerns immediately to CPC or Head Teacher; never promise confidentiality.
- As appropriate, volunteers within St Columba's High School will have to undertake PVG checks and/or follow guidance associated with a 'regulated' role.



## School Arrangements

- Posters with photographs/names/contact details of the CPC/Prevent Leads are displayed at entrances, in corridors, offices, social areas and classrooms.
- Visitor badges include key safeguarding information and fire safety; office staff give a verbal briefing to visitors.
- Start-of-session and year group assemblies remind pupils of the safeguarding team and 'how to get help'.
- Pupil leadership groups (e.g. Rights Respecting Schools, Learner Council, Romero, MVP, Prefects) promote the 'how to get help' message.
- Induction packs include an outline of procedures. Supply/visiting staff sign to confirm they have read and understood procedures.
- Termly reminders via newsletters/website reinforce how to report concerns.

At St Columba's High School a training record is maintained for all staff, detailing the date of most recent Child Protection training and next refresh due. This ensures all personnel meet annual update expectations and mandatory e-learning requirements

## Early Identification and Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

Staff should be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, which may include but are not limited to:

- Physical injury that is unexplained, inconsistent with the account given, or inflicted by someone else.
- Neglect, such as poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, or lack of supervision.
- Emotional distress, such as withdrawal, anxiety, or changes in behaviour.
- Sexual abuse, which may be disclosed by a child or indicated through their behaviour.

When responding to concerns or disclosures, staff should:

- Listen, reassure, clarify only to establish basic facts; avoid leading questions; avoid examining injuries; do not promise confidentiality; explain what will happen next.
- Inform the CPC or HT immediately and complete a written record the same day (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025). Record the child's words verbatim where possible; note time/date, who was present and observations.
- Preserve any evidence (e.g., do not delete messages/screens).
- Do NOT attempt to investigate concerns



## Referral to External Agencies

The CPC will, in line with Inverclyde Council ICPC policies and procedures, determine whether a referral to external agencies such as Social Work Services or Police Scotland is necessary.

Contact details (kept up to date in the staffroom and admin office):

- **Children & Families Social Work (Request for Assistance): 01475 715365**
- **Social Work Out of Hours: 0300 343 1505**
- **Police Scotland: 101 (999 emergency)**
- **SCRA: 0300 200 1680**

When referring, be ready to share:

- Child's details (name, DOB, address), parents/carers details and communication considerations.
- Nature of concern; what happened; when/where; immediate needs; whether the child is currently safe.
- Any injuries/medical needs; the child's presentation and words (use the child's own words where possible).
- Details of any person alleged to be responsible and any known access to other children.
- Record who you spoke to and when; request feedback where possible.

## Information Sharing

- All information relating to child protection concerns will be treated with the strictest confidence and shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard the child.
- Information sharing will be guided by the principles outlined in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 and Inverclyde Council ICPC policies and procedures.
- Records of child protection concerns will be stored securely on SEEMiS in accordance with data protection legislation.

## Safer Recruitment and Selection

St Columba's High School is committed to Inverclyde Council's safer recruitment practices to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This includes PVG checks for all staff and volunteers.

## Allegations against Staff

Any allegations of abuse or misconduct against a member of staff will be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with Inverclyde Council's procedures for managing allegations against staff.



## Attendance, Children Missing from Education (CME), and Transitions

Unexplained absence procedures are followed immediately; prolonged/erratic absence may indicate risk. CME procedures are followed in line with Inverclyde policy; transitions include secure CP file transfer and early planning (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025).

Attendance at St Columba's is tracked daily; unexplained absence procedures are followed immediately. Patterns of low attendance may indicate risk and require a multi-agency response. Children missing from education are monitored in line with national/authority guidance. Requests for home education are overseen by the Education Service and considered with regard to any CP information

## Specific Risks

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) / Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Recognise indicators such as gifts, new relationships with older peers, control, debt bondage, or involvement in criminality. (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025)

- Domestic Abuse (including coercive control)

Children can be victims in their own right. Consider immediate safety planning where applicable, and privacy considerations (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025). Domestic abuse, including coercive control, is defined in the *Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018*.

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

Know health/wellbeing indicators; do not mediate with family; refer immediately. Consider protective orders and legal duties (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025)

- Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery

Indicators include movement, control of documents, inability to speak for self. Immediate referral to Social Work/Police (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025)

- Harmful/Problematic Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Assess behaviour in context, age and power dynamics; support all children involved; follow Inverclyde multi-agency HSB guidance (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025)



## Online Harm / Image-Based Abuse / Sextortion

Preserve evidence; do not copy/forward indecent images; refer promptly; support the child to remove/report content; involve Police where necessary (Inverclyde Education Services Child Protection Guidance, March 2025)

## Prevent Duty (Education)

The PREVENT Strategy is part of the UK government's overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. In the context of safeguarding, the aim of PREVENT is to intervene early to safeguard vulnerable children and protect them from being drawn into terrorism or supporting extremism. This is a core part of the school's wider safeguarding duty.

The Designated **PREVENT Lead** for St Columba's High School is Mr Iain McLean

Staff must be aware of the signs of radicalisation and extremism, which are treated as a safeguarding concern. Concerns relating to a child's vulnerability to radicalisation must be reported immediately using the established procedures for reporting any other child protection concern.

The PREVENT Lead will ensure staff are trained to understand the risks of radicalisation and how to apply the **Notice, Check, Share** procedure when appropriate, in line with Inverclyde Council's policies and procedures regarding the Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP).

## Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Bullying

We follow Inverclyde's Anti-Bullying policy (May 2025). Incidents are recorded in SEEMiS Bullying & Equalities and Pastoral Notes; themes are reviewed termly and actions taken. Bullying linked to protected characteristics is monitored and addressed.

## Curriculum, Pupil Voice and Partnership with Parents/Carers

Through Personal, Social and Health Education, RRS work and assemblies, pupils learn about trusted adults, consent, boundaries, online safety and getting help. Pupil voice activities including the Inverclyde Be-Well Questionnaire check that children know who they can talk to. We work with parents/carers via newsletters and signposting to supports.

## Equal Protection





Physical punishment of children is unlawful in Scotland. Staff respond proportionately to any concerns and may seek early help via Request for Assistance. Child protection must always be considered where there is risk of harm.

## Harmful/Problematic Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

We follow Inverclyde multi-agency guidance for children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviours. Staff distinguish developmentally typical from concerning behaviours, respond to all children involved, and use multi-agency planning where needed.

## Online and Mobile Safety

- Education for pupils and families about online risks (bullying, grooming, coercion/sexortion, exploitation).
- Clear reporting routes for online harms; prompt referral where risk indicates.
- Curriculum, assemblies and targeted inputs aligned to local and national resources.

## Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) & Quality Assurance

As part of continuous improvement:






- Annual CP refresher for all staff (including facilities/admin/catering).
- Mandatory child protection training and access to ICPC multi-agency CLPL.
- Induction and sign off for new/supply/visiting staff; clear guidance displayed.
- Peer review/authority audits; termly internal checks on signage/visibility, records quality and compliance.
- Pupil voice: periodic checks that children know trusted adults and how to seek help.

## Governance, Review and Monitoring

This policy is approved by the CPC and Head Teacher and reviewed annually or sooner following changes to guidance or significant learning. Implementation is monitored via Quality Assurance (QA) activities, PRDs/positive conversations and authority audits/peer reviews.

**Next Review:** August 2026, or earlier should there be any update to national or Inverclyde Council guidance.

## Appendices

<p>Appendix 1 – Quick Action Guide for Staff</p>	 <p>CP Notice SCHS for all staff including visit</p>	
<p>Appendix 2 – CP Poster (Classrooms/Entrances/Offices/Social Areas)</p>	 <p>CHILD PROTECTION POSTER SCHS Aug 20</p>	
<p>Appendix 3 – Record of Concern Template</p>	 <p>Appendix 3 SCHS.docx</p>	