

## Abbey Primary School and Early Years Child Protection Policy

The implementation of this policy will take into account Protection and Safeguarding Children  
Pop May 2024

Staff will follow North Ayrshire Councils Procedures outlined in the Protection and Safeguarding Children POP May 2024. This document provides guidance for policy and practice within all educational establishments. The Child Protection Committee, a multi-agency group which takes the lead role in ensuring that our children and young people are cared for, protected from harm and grow up in a safe environment.

### Child Protection

Child protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

The Scottish approach to Child Protection is based upon the protection of children's rights and The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. Scotland is the first country in the UK to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law this is an important step in making sure Scotland is the best place to grow up.

### Child protection involves:

- Immediate action, if necessary, to prevent significant harm to a child.
- Inter-agency investigation about the occurrence or probability of abuse or neglect, or of a criminal offence against a child. Investigation extends to other children affected by the same apparent risks as the child who is the subject of a referral.
- Assessment and action to address the interaction of behaviour, relationships and conditions that may, in combination, cause or accelerate risks.
- Collaboration and partnership between agencies and families in planning and taking action to reduce the risk of or prevent harm.
- Focus on listening to each child's voice throughout: their experience, needs and feelings.
- Recognition and support for the strengths, relationships and skills within the child and their world in order to form a plan that reduces risk and builds resilience.

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm. This requires a continuum of preventative and protective work.



### Why do we need a policy?

- To provide robust guidance of procedure that is clear and concise for all staff to refer to
- To reassure staff that they are following correct procedures
- Allows transparency for our whole school community to understand the protocol that we will follow should any concerns arise. This document should reassure our school community that Children's Rights are upheld

### Aims

Abbey Primary and Early Years will be a safe school where:

- children feel safe and happy coming to school
- we promote a nurturing ethos
- promote our school values: **Kindness, Determination, Respect** within our school where all children are treated fairly and listened to
- we have high expectations for all and encourage our children to reach their full potential

### Context and Content

School and indeed classroom/playroom ethos are closely related to the area of prevention. It must be appreciated that teaching a child to say "no" will not prevent child abuse. Pupils have to be in an environment where they feel both safe and valued. The way in which the environment is created has much to do with the relationship between adults and children, and between peers - both children and adults. At Abbey we strive to maintain such an environment because when children feel safe they are more likely to feel able to disclose or to show us that they are being abused.

### Indicators of Concern

All staff are expected to ensure they have positive relationships with children and young people and make efforts to know them well. In this way, changes in a child's presentation can be easier to identify.

Concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing can emerge in many ways including:

- Something a child or young person says
- Changes in a child's presentation noted over a period of time e.g their appearance or attitude
- In response to a particular incident
- As a result of direct observations
- Unexplained injuries inconsistent with the child's age and stage of development.
- Concerns raised by other children and adults or through reports by family, friends, a third party or anonymous source
- Through notification that a child may become a member of an at-risk household or a high-risk adult moves into the family home



Each school has a named Child Protection Co-ordinator who is the main point of contact for school staff and for external agencies seeking contact with the school on child protection matters. At Abbey this is the HT Mrs Lauren Smith. There is a staff training programme available to staff and, in addition, at the beginning of each school session all staff receive an update on child protection policies and procedures. Educational Services has a fundamental duty to contribute to the care and safety of all children and young people in North Ayrshire. In fulfilling this duty, the service must engage in close partnership with parents/carers and relevant agencies, primarily Social Services and Health and where appropriate the Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration.

### **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED:**

#### **Responding to Disclosure/Allegations**

**Whoever receives the information from the child (or other person) must:**

- Let them speak and listen carefully
- Never guarantee confidentiality nor agree to do nothing
- Stay calm and not show disbelief or panic
- Avoid expressing views, giving advice, 'fact checking' or asking probing questions
- Take the information seriously, reassure the child and tell them you will need to tell the Child Protection Coordinator
- Tell them you will be available should they wish to speak to you again.
- Make a note of what is being said if you are able
- Depending on the age and stage of the young person, make sure they are offered a safe place to be and are not simply sent back to class.

Once the child has finished speaking and you have ensured they are calm and in a safe place, report the concerns immediately to CP Coordinator and follow their instructions.

You must not discuss what has been said with anyone other than the Child Protection Coordinator or senior leaders.

If anyone notices that a child is responding differently, appears withdrawn, or shows changes in their usual behaviour, they must complete a pastoral note and send it to the SLT.

If a staff member notices an unexplained bruise or mark on a child, and the child's explanation appears inconsistent or concerning, the staff member must report this to a member of management immediately. Do not question the child further or investigate yourself.

***NEVER Carry out an investigation or gather any photographic evidence into the allegation - this is not your role.***

**In all instances of disclosure, the Child Protection Coordinator must:**



- If the disclosure was NOT made to the Head of Establishment or CP Coordinator, the Coordinator must speak to the young person regarding the disclosure. This should be done supportively to verify and clarify, not to challenge or cast doubt.
- Follow the guidance contained in **Appendix 1 - Flowchart**
- ALWAYS open a confidential Child Protection and Safeguarding 7-Part File.
- When the staff member passes you their written record of what was said, make sure it is dated, includes the time, their name and designation.
- Follow guidance in **Appendix 3 - Telephone Notification Checklist**
- Submit **Appendix 4 - Written Notification of Concern**
- *Send all Written Notification of Concerns to the linked social work office and the Education Child Protection Inbox. [EducationCP@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:EducationCP@north-ayrshire.gov.uk). Do not copy in other staff or central officers.*

### **Record Keeping**

- Any disclosure or concern should be recorded as soon after the event as possible, ideally within the same working day, and must be signed and dated.
- As far as possible children and adults should be quoted verbatim, and summarising avoided.
- The views of the child or young person must be sought, taken account of, and recorded regularly. Education staff gather views in a range of ways and must be able to explicitly evidence this. For children with a 7-part file, section 6 can be used.
- Decisions must be recorded in an unambiguous manner and provide clarity on the actions to be taken, the person responsible and the timescale.
- Events must be described factually.
- Where notes refer to further action, outcomes in relation to the child/family should be clearly recorded and dated.
- Record whether parent/carer has been informed. Social Services should always be consulted in the first instance before discussing any disclosure/ Child Protection Concern with a parent/carer.
- Chronologies should be updated where appropriate and significant events and decisions added to Pastoral Notes and AYRshare records.

### **AYRshare**

It is the responsibility of the CP Coordinator to check the existence of an AYRshare record for a young person upon the submission of a WNOC. A Record will be opened for a young person if there is to be further support and intervention from Health and Social Care. Usually the Social Worker will open the Record. If this does not happen, it is acceptable for the Named Person or CP Coordinator to open one, as long as there has been confirmation that 2 or more agencies will be involved. The CP Coordinator must add significant events to the AYRshare chronology.

At Abbey, we all take responsibility for ensuring that every child is safe and secure at all times.

