

Coltness High School



Child Protection Policy

Improving Outcomes for Learners



CONTENTS

Intorduction	3
Aims of Policy	3
What is Child Protection?	4
Helping prevent child abuse	4
Infrastructure and procedures within Coltness High School	5
Recognising child abuse	6
Responding to a child protection	11
The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator	12
Child protection issues specifically relating to staff	13
The role of the local community	14
Appendices	
▪ Important contacts and telephone numbers	15

INTRODUCTION

We believe that Coltness High School provides a safe, positive and caring environment in which children can grow in their physical, emotional, social, academic and moral development. We recognise the vital contribution the school can make to safeguarding pupils from harm and are wholeheartedly committed to carrying out our responsibilities actively and conscientiously in partnership with all other concerned parties.

This policy applies to all Coltness High school's staff, pupils, visiting adults/ students, Parents/carers and anyone else associated with the school who may also contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator, David MacPherson (DHT) or Head Teacher should they have any concerns regarding the care and welfare of Coltness High pupils.

AIMS OF POLICY

- To support the development of the whole child as an individual by promoting security, confidence and independence
- To raise awareness of all staff to their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible causes of abuse
- To ensure that staff concerned with particular children in need are aware of their role in safeguarding these pupils
- To use a clear system of monitoring children who are known to be, or considered as likely to be, at risk of harm
- To ensure that good communication between all members of staff is fostered
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially Social Services, the NHS and Police Scotland
- To ensure all adults working within the school with access to children have undergone the appropriate checks to establish their suitability for working with children

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

Child Protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where **there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm**. Child protection guidance provides overall direction for agencies and professional disciplines where there are concerned that a child may be at risk of harm.

HELPING PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

Coltness High School recognises that developing the necessary qualities within both the pupils themselves and the school as a whole can support the prevention of child abuse.

Coltness High School is, therefore, committed to:

- Establishing and maintaining an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensuring all pupils know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Including in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and ensure they know who to turn to for help
- Including in the curriculum materials which will help children develop appropriate views and attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to the care of children

The above are integral to Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and are facilitated and delivered through the procedures and practices of the schools curriculum, ethos, pupil support team and PSHE programme.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES WITHIN COLTNESS HIGH SCHOOL

The school's procedures for safeguarding children are in line with National guidelines and the guidelines and procedures of North Lanarkshire Council

Coltness High School will ensure that:

- The Child Protection Co-ordinator receives regular Child Protection training
- During the Child Protection Co-ordinator's absence, the Head Teacher will act on the CP Officers behalf, having received appropriate training.
- All members of staff know:
 - The name of the Child Protection Co-ordinator (and designated depute coordinator)
 - That they have an individual statutory responsibility for referring child protection concerns to the Child Protection Co-ordinator and designated depute coordinator as soon as can reasonably be considered possible
- All members of staff are required to complete the yearly Child Protection Training at Inset and have this signed off by the Child protection Co-Ordinator In addition to this, all staff receive annual refresher training which includes:
 - Their personal responsibilities in relation to child protection
 - The school's specific child protection procedures
 - How to support and respond to a child who tells of abuse
 - Any appropriate legislation relating to Child Protection
- All matters relating to child protection remain confidential information about a child and will only be disclosed to members of staff on a need to know basis
- Parents/carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff with regard to Child Protection
- Parents/carers are aware of the role they play in child protection and understand that good communication between parents/carers and the school is vital to this
- Parents/carers are aware of this policy and have access to a copy
- All new members of staff are made aware of Child Protection procedures during their induction to the school and are provided with a copy of this policy
- All adults within the school with access to pupils undergo the appropriate checks to establish their suitability for working with children
- Entry to the school premises is controlled by an electronic door and authorised visitors to the school are logged in and out of the premises

RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

The National Guidance of Child Protection Scotland 2021 has a strong focus on proactive support to prevent and identify harm.

All those working around children and their families should have some understanding of child protection issues and be confident in the recognition of and response to child abuse.

The following circumstances are considered to be indicators that a child may be at increased risk of harm within their families:

- Domestic abuse
- Parental alcohol and drug misuse
- Non-engaging families
- Attendance Issues
- Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems
- Children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviour
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Honour based violence and forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen by proxy)
- Sudden unexpected death in infants and children

Further detailed information on all of the above circumstances can be found within The National Guidance of Child Protection Scotland (Section 3 – page 87)

There are different type of abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

These are described in detail below. It is vital that all Coltness High staff take the time to familiarise themselves with those signs which could potentially arouse concern and require action.

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. Physical harm includes:

- a child being hit, punched, kicked or bitten
- a child being shaken violently
- a child being burned or deliberately scalded
- a child being squeezed with violence or a tempted suffocation
- deliberate poisoning (household substance, alcohol, drugs or medicines)
- a child being shut in a cupboard or confined in small places
- a child being tied or strapped down

Signs that should concern you:

- unexplained injuries (bruised eyes, fractured or broken bones, burn or bite marks)
- perplexing illnesses
- continuous 'accidents'
- an unlikely (or no) explanation for an injury
- a continual pattern of accidents or injuries
- a child being reluctant to change for physical activities at school, etc.

Behavioral indicators may include:

- a child who is very reluctant to return home
- a child who appears withdrawn or in pain/discomfort
- a child who is resistant to going home with a particular family member
- self-harm, self-destructiveness
- persistent aggression and violent play

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the 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 in so far 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 levels of emotional abuse are present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Emotional abuse includes:

- verbal abuse (children being told they are stupid, useless, ugly or should never have been born)
- children being subjected to continuous criticism or faced with unrealistically high expectations
- children having their interests and achievements ridiculed or compared unfavourably
- affection given by parents being dependent on the child's behaviour or achievements
- children being overprotected to an unrealistic extent
- communication with the child being distorted so that the adult uses his/her maturity inappropriately to make the child feel guilty
- children having their toys withdrawn, denied or sold by parents/carers as a punishment
- children being emotionally damaged by experiences of domestic abuse within the house

Signs that should concern you about a child:

- child is developmentally delayed
- child indicates through the use of words and body language that they think they are worthless, stupid or unattractive
- children expect blame and punishment (or blame themselves)
- children may harm themselves
- children may find it difficult to make friends and see themselves as not being likeable
- children may be mistrusting of adults
- low self-esteem
- sudden speech and language difficulties
- significant decline in concentration
- head banging or rocking
- compulsive stealing (from parents/carers/teachers)
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- running away
- indiscriminate friendliness

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 the child consented or assented Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening The activities may include 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, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate way

Sexual abuse includes:

- penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- sexual fondling
- masturbation
- sexual exhibitionism
- non-contact activities, such as watching pornographic materials
- pornographic images
- grooming (including grooming via the internet)

Signs that should concern you:

As with any kind of child abuse, there is no definitive list of signs of sexual abuse The following are not in themselves absolute evidence of sexual abuse. Concerns must be placed within an understanding of the normal range of children's development:

- high sexualised behaviour, rather than affectionate physical contact
- abused children may express their worries and experiences through play
- sexually explicit paintings or drawings
- sexual knowledge or curiosity (unlikely for their age)
- children may tell you about secrets or games that they are uneasy about
- regression in development
- self-harm
- a child not wishing to go with a certain adult or be looked after by a certain person (etc. babysitter)

A note about Child Sex Offenders

- abusers may be extremely frightening and threaten to hurt the child or someone they care about
- abusers may claim that nobody will believe the child if they tell (and may threaten the child with this)
- some abusers will attempt to bribe children with presents, treats or money
- some abusers work to convince children that what they are doing is a normal and acceptable activity within the family or between friends
- abusers come from all classes, professions, racial and religious backgrounds and can be anyone – family members, neighbours, friends, doctors, community group helpers, even professional colleagues
- most known abusers are men, but some women sexually abuse their own or other children
- young people also abuse other children - about one third of reported cases involve young people

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, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing 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' or 'growth faltering' where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or developmental milestones and where physical and generic 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.

Neglect includes:

- inadequate food – leading to children and young people being malnourished
- inadequate clothing (for time of year; shoes too tight; ill-fitting clothing; dirty and unwashed clothing)
- neglect of children's basic physical needs (dirty, smelly, unkempt)
- leaving young children unattended

Signs that should concern you:

- child/young person may be too thin
- child/young person may be tired and lethargic
- child/young person may arrive at your workplace desperate for food, constantly hungry, eating large amounts
- child/young person may be regularly dressed inappropriately for the weather
- clothes may be dirty, smelly or soiled
- parents may not bring the child on a regular basis
- frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school
- child/young person may have untreated medical conditions or infections
- low self-esteem
- consider: are all the children in the family neglected or is it only one child/ young person

RESPONDING TO A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

Grounds for concern can arise from a wide range of circumstances but will generally be covered by the following events:

- A child states that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe
- A third party or anonymous allegation is received
- A child's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements caused suspicion of abuse
- A child reports an incident of abuse that happened some time ago
- Staff witness abuse

Remember: if you don't share your concerns, a child may be harmed

How should you respond to the child?

- Listen and observe with care
- Treat the allegation in a serious manner
- Reassure the child that he/she is doing the right thing telling you
- Affirm the child's feelings as expressed by the child
- Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality or secrecy
- Do not ask leading questions
- Seek clarification using open ended questions only
- Do not interrogate the child
- Do not show disbelief
- Do not introduce personal or third party experience of abuse
- Avoid displaying strong emotions

What action should you take?

- Any grounds for concern should be reported immediately to the Child Protection Officer.
- If there is a direct evidence or suspicion of child abuse, the matter must be reported immediately; staff should not wait to gather evidence nor agree to keep the information secret or discuss the matter with others.
- Staff must follow the guidance given by the Child Protection Officer and Head Teacher in relation to recording concerns.
- Information should include a clear, succinct chronology of events, all relevant factual information. This will be signed and dated by the member of staff.

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR

The designated Child Protection Co-ordinator will:

- Be the point of contact for Child Protection and Safe guarding.
- Adhere to North Lanarkshire Council Education, Skills and Youth Employment Child Protection Procedures by referring children to Social Services or Police Scotland if there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing
- Record and submit the relevant paperwork to Social work & L Mitchell the Child Protection Development Officer.
- Store Child Protection records confidentially in a securely locked cabinet in the Child Protection Co-ordinator's office
- Monitor the attendance of children on the Child Protection Register and notify Social Services immediately if there is an unexplained absence
- Attend initial case conferences, core groups, Child Protection Review Conferences and Children's Reporter meetings (or, if necessary, send a Principal Teacher on their behalf)
- Submit written reports to Social Services or the Children's Reporter on request within the agreed time limits
- Raise awareness of contextual safeguarding.
- Ensure all staff have been provided relevant training on Child Protection procedures.
- Ensure staff have been provided training and relevant information on the Scottish Governments priorities of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation & PREVENT.
- Liaise with other agencies to safeguard children.

SPECIFIC CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES RELATING TO STAFF

Staff support

Coltness High School understands that staff who have been involved with a child who has been abused or appears at risk of harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. Support will be given to staff by providing an opportunity to talk with the Head Teacher or Depute about their anxieties and reflect on possible outcomes. If appropriate, external support will be sought via the local authority's Staff Welfare Officer.

Allegations against staff

Coltness High is aware that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. In such cases, the member of staff will be informed by the Head Teacher who will carry out an investigation and, if necessary, refer the matter to the school's link Education Officer. Should the allegation made to a member of staff involve the Head Teacher, the member of staff should immediately inform the school's Child Protection Officer who will notify the link Education Officer.

Whistle-blowing

Coltness High school recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff, therefore, should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about any inappropriate attitudes, approaches or actions of colleagues.

Physical contact with pupils

Coltness High staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misrepresentation.

If it becomes necessary to physically assist a pupil for their own or others' safety, The link Depute Head should be notified that day and a note placed on SEEMIS.

Administering First Aid

All first aid and routine hygiene care will be appropriately recorded. If it is necessary for the child to remove clothing for this treatment, there should be an adult of the same gender as the child present.

Photographing pupils

All staff should ensure that they do not take photographs of children and young people on a personal device. This includes, though is not limited to the following areas. Whilst on trips and excursions, for social media, for school newsletters and displays, for the school website, sharing with local press.

Contact with pupils outside school

School staff should be alert to the possible risks which might arise from contact with pupils and parents outside of school. This is particularly the case on Social Media and staff are advised not to do this on personal accounts. If in doubt, they should speak to the Child Protection Officer or Head Teacher.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The community as a whole has responsibility for the wellbeing of Coltness High School pupils. Members of the public should remain alert to circumstances in which children and young people may be harmed. Individuals can assist the school and other agencies by bringing cases to their attention, relatives, friends and neighbours of children and young people are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned.

Because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, people must be confident that any information they provide will be treated in a sensitive way and used only to protect the interest of the child. They should know that early action on their part is in the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the children.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Social Work

Wishaw Social Work **01698 348200**

**Social Work Emergency Services
(Out of Hours)** **0800 121 4114**

Police

All Areas **101**
The Family Protection Unit **Access via 101**

Education, Skills and Communities

Lindsay Mitchell, CP Development Officer **Access via office**

Health NHS Lanarkshire

Child Protection Advisors **01698 452861**

