

Auchinloch Primary School & Nursery Class



Child Protection Policy

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The role of our School

We recognise the very important part we, as a staff, have to play in child protection.

At Auchinloch Primary & Nursery Class we recognise that because of the following we are likely to be involved in child protection procedures:

- As we get to know each child well, we can notice changes in behaviour and possible evidence of abuse.
- A child may disclose to us because we know each child well, we are trusted, or because we are seen as an appropriate person. We understand that children often look for trusted but uninvolved people to talk to.
- As children who have been abused become more able to recognise what is happening to them, the likelihood of disclosure is greater.
- Other professionals may have information regarding abuse of a child in school. They may look to us to contribute in the gathering of information and possibly to take part in interagency decision making regarding a child.
- We understand that abuse occurs in all groups of society and every socio-economic class and in every part of the country.

Identifying abuse

Abuse is usually separated into the following 4 categories:

1. Physical injury – this is defined as actual or attempted physical injury to a child, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Signs of physical injury may be:

- Tells you about punishment which appears excessive
- Withdraws from physical contact
- Tries to keep arms and legs covered in hot weather or in P.E.
- Appears to have a fear of going home
- Does not like seeing the doctor or school nurse
- Shows self destructive tendencies
- Is aggressive towards others
- Runs away from school or home

FGM is a form of child abuse against girls, and therefore must be dealt with as part of existing child protection policies and procedure consider the definition and practice of FGM. During Child Protection training every year staff are made aware of:

- communities which may be at risk of FGM practices
- indicators which can be used to identify risk
- effective safeguarding practice as a way to protect girls.

2. Sexual abuse – occurs when any person, deliberately or through neglect, exploits a child, directly or indirectly in any activity intended to lead to sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person. This definition applies whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Changes in school behaviour and performance which seem inexplicable
- Behaviour which seems sexual in nature but inappropriate to the age of the child
- A need to cling or be constantly reassured
- Regressive behaviour e.g. thumb-sucking, acting like a younger child, reverting to toys that are age inappropriate
- Complaining of genital pains or itches
- Wetting, during day and/or night
- Talking anxiously about some adults as if they are not to be trusted
- Possession of money, or gifts which might be more appropriate to an older person
- Withdrawal from social contacts or even depression
- Being very secretive
- Having nightmares or not sleeping
- Suffering from chronic illnesses such as throat infections
- Suffering from anorexia or bulimia
- Being frightened to undress in a gym
- Suffering from fear attacks or other phobias

3. Emotional abuse – is defined as the failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the development and behaviour of the child.

Signs of emotional abuse could be:

- ⊕ Appears to be very far behind in development, physically, mentally or emotionally
- ⊕ Talks about punishment which seems excessive
- ⊕ Over-reacts to mistakes at school
- ⊕ Is frightened to try new things
- ⊕ Has poor self-esteem
- ⊕ Develops speech difficulties
- ⊕ Begins to thumb-suck, twist hair, or rock
- ⊕ Self harms
- ⊕ Does not want parents to be contacted
- ⊕ Becomes involved in abuse of solvents or drugs
- ⊕ Runs away, from school or/and home
- ⊕ Steals belongings or food

4. Physical neglect – occurs when a child's essential needs are not being met (food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth) causing impairment to physical health and development. Such neglect endangers the child.

Neglect may be suspected from the following signs:

- ⊕ Is very thin
- ⊕ Often appears dirty, or clothes are dirty and uncared for
- ⊕ Often seems tired
- ⊕ Is often absent or arrives late to school
- ⊕ Is destructive of property
- ⊕ Appears not to receive treatment for sickness or injury
- ⊕ Has poor self-esteem
- ⊕ Has poor relationships with peers
- ⊕ Runs away from school and/or home
- ⊕ Steals regularly, especially food
- Seems regularly to look for left over food

Disclosure

If a child discloses to a member of our staff, the following must be taken into account:

- Try to give the child some privacy and try not to interrupt
- Accept what the child is saying
- Make sure that the child knows you are taking seriously what they are saying
- Remember to reassure the child that it is not their fault
- Tell the child what you will do next

IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO PROMISE THE CHILD THAT YOU WILL KEEP WHAT HAS BEEN TOLD TO YOU CONFIDENTIAL.

We recognise that it is not part of our role to be involved in disclosure interviewing. We must never ask leading questions such as “What did he/she do next?”

Some open questioning may be appropriate such as “Is there anything else you want to tell me?” or a simple “Yes?”

Members of staff after a disclosure made by a child must inform the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will decide on the next course of action.

Suspicion of abuse

If a member of staff suspects that a child has/is being abused, they should record the concern and discuss the concern with the Head Teacher. From the discussion a decision will be made on the next step, this could be a combination of the following:

- To keep a record of information regarding a child
- Discuss the concern with other members of staff involved with child or indeed other agencies
- Head Teacher contact duty social worker and if appropriate North Lanarkshire Child Protection Officer. If the Head Teacher is unavailable and a disclosure has been made, the Principal Teacher will follow the agreed procedures.

A format has been appended to this document to be used as a record to be kept in such instances as require information to be recorded. This information will be kept centrally in the Head Teacher’s office.

STEP BY STEP SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Abuse is obvious/child disclosed/teacher suspects abuse or has a concern.
2. Member of staff makes a note of time, date, observations, what was said, witnesses etc.
3. Member of staff speaks to Head Teacher.
4. Both confirm pupil's name, address, date of birth, names of parents/guardians.
5. Discuss nature of disclosure/level of suspicion.
6. Contact duty Social Worker.
7. Discuss action with Social Worker.
8. Inform school nurse, medical officer if agreed with Social Worker.
9. Head Teacher prepare written report (confidential).
10. Give information to other staff if appropriate and necessary.
11. Check action takes place.

Child Protection Case Conferences

It will usually be the Head Teacher or Principal Teacher who will attend case conferences, but not always.

Preparation of reports for Reporter or Social Services is done on a collaboration basis between the appropriate member of staff and Head Teacher.