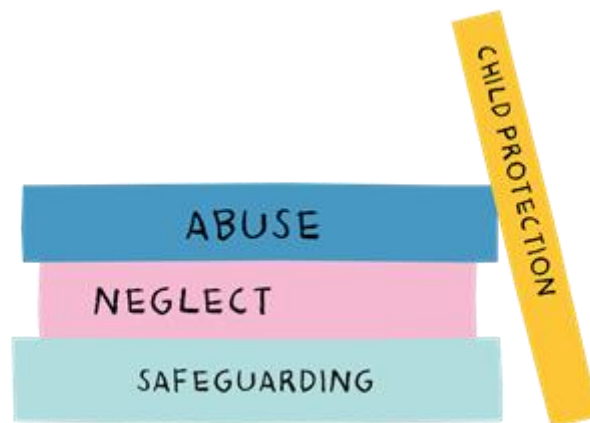


Balmalloch Primary School & Nursery Class



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



responsi **B**ility

gr**A**ttitude

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

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Love

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

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friends**H**ip & family

A Place of Enthusiastic Learning and Achievement!

Introduction

Balmalloch Primary School & Nursery Class recognises its responsibility to have in place arrangements related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The revised Guidance (National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023) 'recognises that physical and emotional safety provides a foundation for wellbeing and healthy development'.

Through partnership working and day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, staff at the school and nursery have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect from pre-birth onwards, including safe transitions of vulnerable young people towards adult life and services, referring them to the appropriate authorities/services. 'Everyone' has a role in protecting children from harm.

'The Health and Wellbeing Across Learning: Responsibilities of All - Experiences and Outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence, alongside the GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators, summarises how practitioners, pupils, parents and communities must work together in protecting and promoting children's rights, wellbeing and safety.' The wellbeing indicators provide a holistic representation of the child's wellbeing needs and outcomes. 'My World Triangle' considers unmet developmental needs, focusing on the child's world – the child, their family and their environment. The Resilience Matrix focuses on positive adaptations to stresses in the child's world, identifying protective factors to support the child.

This policy sets out how the school and nursery discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school and nursery.

There are four main elements to our policy:

- **Prevention and Protection** through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos through our core values.
- **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- **Support to pupils** who may have been abused.
- **Preventing unsuitable people working with children**

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school and nursery including students, parent helpers and members of the community. Facilities Support Officers, Catering Supervisor and Assistants, Breakfast Club Assistant, Dining Hall Assistant, Classroom Assistants, Additional Support Needs Assistants, Clerical Staff as well as teachers/practitioners can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents or members of the community may also contact the school.

PREVENTION

The school and nursery recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help prevention.

The school and nursery will therefore:

- ensure early intervention and support for families, 'recognising the influence of structural inequalities and adverse experiences such as poverty, ill health and neglect';
- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are given the opportunity and encouraged to talk, and are listened to and their views are taken seriously, 'in accordance with their age, level of maturity and understanding.'

The Data Protection Act 2018 states 'a child under the age of 16 must be treated as though they have capacity to exercise their rights under that Act if the child has a general understanding of what it means to exercise those rights – particularly if the child is aged 12 years or over. If the child is too young or immature to understand practitioners will seek consent of the parent, unless there are good reasons not to do so and these reasons will be recorded;

- ensure children know that there are adults in the school and nursery whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- recognise the role of the media and internet, particularly in teenage years, encouraging safe use and support online;
- 'build on strengths and resilience as well as addressing risks and vulnerabilities within the child's world';
- include, in the curriculum, emotional literacy activities and opportunities for the mental, emotional, social and physical development of children which equip them with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help;
- include, in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills;
- work towards the "Getting It Right For Every Child" agenda with reference to the eight wellbeing indicators, the Early Years Framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The content of this Guidance is in four parts:

- The context for Child Protection
- Roles and Responsibilities for Child Protection
- Identifying and Responding to Concerns about Children
- Specific Support Needs and Concerns

What is Child Abuse and Child Neglect?

(National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland – 2021, updated 2023)

- Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol or drug use.
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse including Child Sexual Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Neglect
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage

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 concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child protection procedures are initiated when police, social work or health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm.'
- **Elements in Child Protection Assessment:**
 - Characteristics (Ecological & developmental/Dynamic – responsive to immediate safety and needs/Trauma informed)
 - Components (GIRFEC/Approved Framework/Analysis of risks, strengths, professionals/child/family perspectives)
 - Approach (Child-centred/Strengths-based/Collaborative teamwork)
 - Context (Location/Culture/Inequalities)
 - Co-ordination (Shared understanding/Through transitions)
 - Leadership and Learning (Supervision & Reflective Practice/Evaluation & Inspection/Research on Systems, Practice and Outcomes)
 - Guiding Considerations (Rights/Relationships/Resilience)

• **Initiating Child Protection Procedures**

- Concerns about possible harm to a child from abuse, neglect or exploitation must be reported to police or social work without delay.
- Child protection procedures are initiated when police, social work or health determine that a child may have been significantly harmed or are at risk of harm.
- Concerns about risk may arise in a number of ways:
 - because of what a child has said
 - over a period of time
 - in response to a particular incident
 - as a result of direct observations
 - through reports from family, from a third party, or from an anonymous source
 - if children are known to social work or have an existing Child's Plan
 - through notification that a child may become a member of the same household as a person who has committed specific offences (see National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – Schedule 1 – updated 2023)

Safety and Rights

- 'The Scottish Government supports implementation of UNCRC Rights and intends to incorporate into Scots law. The Convention Rights are inter-related and inter-dependent (e.g.) rights to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence'.
- The Rights of the Child form part of Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class Positive Relationships and Behaviour procedures, forming the basis for discussion through Reflection Room conversations. (Appendix C)

Culture, Community and Family Context

- 'It is essential to consider the child's experience and consider the risks, stresses and protective factors in the child's world. Cultural sensitivity and competence are necessary when considering the family perspective. Religion, faith and places of community and worship may be a key reference point and a source of resilience, identity and social connection. At the same time, risks and stresses are accentuated for some families by isolation, racism, food insecurity, poor housing, barriers to employment and especially poverty.'

Inequalities

- Risk of harm may be as a result of 'factors such as 'poverty, housing, employment, ill health, available support, personal attitudes and behaviours.
- Risk of harm may be as a result of 'early adverse experiences or intellectual disabilities'.

- Risk of harm may be as a result of 'relationships and factors in the child's family and wider world, including past experiences.'

Adult Protection

An adult at risk is a person aged 16 or over who:

- is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests;
- is at risk of harm;
- is affected by a disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, putting them at increased risk of vulnerability of being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

A form for reporting adult protection concerns is available for members of the public to ensure the appropriate support can be provided. (Appendix B)

Guiding Principles

- Information will only be shared where necessary for child protection purposes;
- If information needs to be shared, the person involved will be informed and understand what and why it is happening and whom it is being shared with, unless it is detrimental to:

- the best interests of a child;
- the health and safety of a child or another person;
- the prevention or detection of a crime (e.g.) creating a risk of harm to a child;

OR

- the apprehension or prosecution of offenders;

OR

- it is not reasonably practical to contact the person;
- it would take too long given the particular circumstances (e.g.) acting quickly;
- the cost would be prohibitive;
- there is some other compelling reason.

Procedures

General

The school and nursery will follow the procedures outlined by the Scottish Government in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021). The school and nursery will follow guidance outlined in:

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1 – Promoting and Managing Attendance

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 – Preventing and Managing Exclusions

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3 – Physical Intervention in Schools

The views of children, families, professionals in the public and Third Sectors, practice educators and community groups have been listened to through the review process, ensuring improvement to practice.

The school and nursery will:

- ensure children get help when they need it, with action being taken, responding to concerns about risk of harm;
- ensure it has a Named Person who is the single point of contact and that all stakeholders know who that is;
- ensure that all staff engage in appropriate Child Protection training and are aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- ensure this training is updated every year;
- recognise the importance of the role of the designated teacher/practitioner and ensure s/he has the time and training to undertake her/his duties and responsibilities;
- ensure there are contingency arrangements should the Named Person not be available (e.g.) reporting incidents to the Depute Head Teacher if the HT is not available and the Principal Teacher if the DHT is not available; Principal Leads (during Full Time provision, when Term Time staff are unavailable).
- make arrangements for the Named Person to take advice from a child protection specialist, when managing complex cases;

The Named Person and Child Protection Co-ordinator for the school is the Head Teacher, who has overall responsibility for all aspects of child protection with the support of the Depute Head Teacher and Principal Teacher.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator for the nursery is the Head Teacher with the support of the Principal Leads. The Named Person for the Nursery is the Health Visitor working with the family.

During Term Time holiday closure; the nursery Child Protection Co-ordinator will be the Early Learning and Childcare Principal Leads.

The Role of All School & Nursery Staff, including Volunteers, the PTA and the Parent Council

The school & nursery will ensure every member of staff, the Parent Council, the PTA and every volunteer:

- knows the name of the designated person and her/his role and responsibility;
- has an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns;
- will receive training at the point of induction, and this will be updated every year as a minimum, so that everyone knows;
- his/her personal responsibility;
- school and authority procedures;
- the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse;
- how to support and to respond to a child who discloses details of alleged significant harm;
- is able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children by a colleague and is assured that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed policies and procedures;
- has access to the North Lanarkshire Child and Adult Protection, Procedures and Guidance based on National Guidance for Child Protection as outlined by the Scottish Government (2021 – updated 2023).

Liaison with Other Agencies

The school and nursery will:

- work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at, and the presentation of written reports to, initial case conferences, core groups and child protection review conferences;

The school and nursery will notify the allocated Social Worker if:

- a pupil on the child protection register has been excluded (whether fixed-term or permanently);
- there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days' duration from school, or one day following a weekend, or as agreed as part of any child protection or core group plan.

Record Keeping

The school and nursery will:

- keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;

- ensure all records are kept secure and in a locked location separate from the child's personal file.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school and nursery will ensure that:

- confidentiality protocols are followed and information is shared appropriately. If in doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager or outside agency as required;
- the Head teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Principal Teacher, Principal Lead or Designated Teacher/Early Years' Practitioner discloses any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only;
- all staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children;
- all staff are aware that they cannot promise a child confidentiality.

Communication with Parents

The school and nursery will:

- undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this;
- ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and nursery and staff for safeguarding children (child protection) by setting out its obligations in the school handbook.

SUPPORTING THE PUPIL AT RISK

General

The school and nursery will recognise:

- that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. This may have a detrimental effect on their well-being;
- that it may be the only safe, stable and secure environment in the lives of children at risk. This may impact on a child's behaviour, which may be challenging and defiant, or the child may become withdrawn;
- that some children actually adopt abusive behaviours, and that these children must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school and nursery will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- its ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued without apportioning blame;
- a Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth;
- liaison with other appropriate agencies, which support the pupil;
- a commitment to develop supportive relationships with parents/carers whenever it is in a pupil's best interest to do so;
- recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse are vulnerable and in need of support and protection;
- vigilantly monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and notifying appropriate agencies as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

When a pupil on the Child Protection Register transfers to another school or nursery, information will be transferred to the new school or nursery immediately.

Children with Special Educational Needs

The school and nursery recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse. School and nursery staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Drug Use and Child Protection

The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs or reported evidence of their drug use are not necessarily sufficient in themselves to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

- When there is evidence or reasonable cause:
 - * to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to abuse;
 - * to believe the pupil's drug related behaviour is placing them at significant risk;
 - * to suspect that the misuse is being prompted by serious parent/ carer drug misuse.

Children of Drug Using Parents

Further enquiries will be made when the school receives reliable information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- the parental misuse is regarded as problematic or there is evidence to suggest a chaotic and unpredictable home environment which can be attributed to drug or alcohol misuse;
- there is evidence to suggest that children are not being provided with acceptable or consistent levels of social and health care;
- it is suspected that children are being exposed to criminal behaviour.

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH CHILDREN

- The school and nursery will operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate Disclosure or member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme.
- The school and nursery will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and adhere to the relevant procedures in accordance with Government guidance.
- The school and nursery will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance.
- The school and nursery will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- The school and nursery will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings being taken against them as outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Safe Holding and Restraint of Pupils

The school and nursery policy on Safe Holding and Restraint by staff is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the local authority and the school. The school and nursery acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort and that at all times it must be the minimum force necessary to prevent injury to themselves or another person, or damage to property.

The school and nursery will follow guidance in 'Included, Engaged and Involved – Part 3 – A Relationship and Rights-based Approach to Physical Intervention in Scottish Schools.

Anti-Bullying and Positive Relationships

The school and nursery policy on Anti Bullying and Positive Relationships is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by all stakeholders. The school and nursery acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Equality and Diversity – Racist Incidents

The school and nursery policy on 'Equality and Diversity', including racist incidents, is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by all stakeholders. The school and nursery acknowledge that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Health & Safety Issues

The school and nursery 'Health & Safety' policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by all stakeholders. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school and nursery environment and when away from the school participating in school trips and visits. Risk Assessments are carried out by school and nursery staff, adhering to North Lanarkshire Council's policy and staff engage in professional development activities through Learn NL or training provided through North Lanarkshire Council. The Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Principal Teacher and Principal Leads engage in HSE Health and Safety training provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

North Lanarkshire Council fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to child protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, ensuring schools:

- have a child protection policy and procedures in place;
- operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers;
- have procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers;
- have a senior member on the school's leadership team who is the Named Person with responsibility for dealing with child protection issues;
- monitor the operation of all policies which impact upon child protection issues and takes action to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements;
- liaise with the Local Authority and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the head teacher, other members of the Senior Leadership and Management Team or staff;
- review their policies and procedures annually and provide information to the Local Authority about them.

Reporting an Incident

If you wish to notify the school of a concern, please contact the school by telephone – 01236 632058. The details will be recorded on the Incident Reporting form (Appendix B) and shared with the appropriate agency (Social Work/Police) if required. Social Work/Police may then contact you raising the concern before appropriate action, if any, can be taken. This information will be recorded in the school and nursery complaints/concerns file. Following investigation by the relevant agencies, information may be recorded in the child's pastoral notes. Agencies will liaise with the child's school/nursery to ensure safeguarding and welfare of all children.

Information will be updated on Pastoral Notes/Chronology and the School and Nursery Database.

Evaluating our Work

We will use HGIOS? 4th Edition and HGIOELC? to evaluate our work, identifying strengths and areas for development to ensure we make improvements to support learners.

This policy was reviewed in May, 2024 – Included, Engaged and Involved Guidance added/
National Guidance update 2023

This policy was reviewed in March, 2023

This policy was reviewed in March 2022 – National Guidance for Child Protection (2021) added

This policy was reviewed in March, 2021

This policy was reviewed in August, 2020 – Supplementary COVID Guidance added

This policy was reviewed in March, 2020

This policy was reviewed in August 2019

This policy was reviewed in August 2018

Ruth McCarthy

Head Teacher Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class

Review Schedule: This policy will be reviewed in May 2025

This policy was checked by Lindsey Mitchell, Child Protection Officer, North Lanarkshire Council. (2022)

Documents/Websites/Resources

1. Kooth – Mental Health App (Kooth.com)
2. Education Scotland – Child Protection and Safeguarding
<https://education.gov.scot/about-education-scotland/policies-and-information/safeguarding/>
 - Learning in Scotland
 - Curriculum for Excellence
 - Professional Learning
 - Practitioner Resources
 - Inspection and Review
 - Parentzone Scotland
3. North Lanarkshire Council Practice Guide
4. North Lanarkshire Council Child Protection and Safeguarding Tile - Glow

Appendix A

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Supplementary guidance for Chief Officers, Chief Social Work Officers and Child Protection Committees regarding Child Protection

Purpose

1. This document provides supplementary guidance on child protection measures in relation to the current Covid-19 outbreak. It is provided for Chief Officers, professional leaders in children's services and Child Protection Committees, who should ensure it is taken account of within local partnerships.
2. This supplementary guidance should be read alongside associated information that has been published in response to the outbreak. It may be updated as the pandemic develops.

Child Protection during the Covid-19 outbreak

3. Child protection is part of a continuum of collaborative responsibilities upon agencies working with children, which commences pre-birth. It requires good professional judgement, based on assessment and evidence, informed by the perspectives of the team around the child, including the child and family.
4. It is clear that there are additional pressures across maternity and children's services as a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak. It is therefore necessary to consider how we streamline service delivery and management processes, without compromising our actions to protect children.
5. It is also likely that the vulnerability of some children will increase because of the additional pressures placed on families and communities by the Covid-19 outbreak. This may mean that some children could be at risk of harm and neglect, where that would not otherwise have been the case. Children may be exposed to more risks online. We should also be alert to signs that individuals or groups are using the current crisis as an opportunity for the criminal or sexual exploitation of children.
6. Further, lockdown can create circumstances where instances of domestic abuse and coercive control may increase in frequency.

7. Local Child Protection Committees are taking action to ensure that children are protected. This should involve all of the key agencies, and include consideration of any necessary enhancements to local processes, and the communication of these changes to the workforce and wider community. ADES and Social Work Scotland provide examples of these communications.

8. It may be that CPCs should consider and adopt streamlined governance mechanisms to support continuing effective decision making during the pandemic.

9. Chief Officers should also ensure that contingency plans are in place, should any key personnel be absent from work or otherwise unable to fulfil their responsibilities.

10. Critically, Chief Officers should evidence collective leadership in the current situation, making collaborative decisions when there may be an impact on partner services, and operating to agreed processes, thresholds and assessments of risk. It will not be helpful for example, if one service routinely responds to risk by increasing referrals to a partner service, without consideration of the impact.

11. All Chief Officers should ensure that child protection services continue to be adequately resourced. Albeit agencies will face many increasing demands in coming months, the protection of children has to remain an overriding priority.

Domestic Abuse

12. The restrictions on movement because of the pandemic create new risks to women and children experiencing or recovering from domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence. As set out in additional guidance issued during the outbreak, these include the perception that specialist and statutory services are not operating or doing so with a reduced reach, so there is no-where to turn for support; the lack of physical access to normal social networks; barriers caused through dependence on telephone and online communications (e.g. fears around privacy); financial dependencies exacerbated by economic impacts of the pandemic; and increased access by perpetrators to women, children and young people either through them being locked down together or through the efforts of perpetrators to exert control through the lens of the pandemic.

13. In the context of the previous statement, abusive behaviours may be perpetrated through the exploitation of contact arrangements for children where the mother/father and her/his children are living apart from the offending parent.

14. Agencies and practitioners working with children and families should maintain and develop their awareness of the dynamics of coercive control, ensure that they prioritise the needs of the non-offending parent and her children, continue to apply the approach outlined in 'Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women and continue to take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of women and their children. Agencies and practitioners should seek to work closely with their local specialist services (e.g. women's aid) and engage with their local violence against women partnership.

Self-care, support and supervision of staff

15. The support and supervision of practitioners is always important, but it is particularly so in these challenging times.

16. All practitioners involved in child protection should ensure that whatever the urgency of each situation, they follow guidance on protecting their own health and that of service users.

17. It is recognised that management support and direction may need to include new and innovative approaches, but we should ensure that:

- Agencies continue to take measures to ensure accountability for staff practice.
- Practice in individual case work, continues to be monitored and reflected on.
- The wellbeing of staff is a constant feature of local management processes.

Enhancements to processes

18. As stated above, local Child Protection Committees should consider and communicate necessary enhancements to local practice and procedures. This guidance provides advice regarding the enhancements that may be necessary.

Named person or point of contact

19. The most effective protection of children continues to involve early support within the family, before urgent action is needed. The ongoing support of a named person or first point of contact will be more important than ever. Parents and carers should be clear about how they can get advice or raise concerns in relation to their children, especially if the customary named person or point of contact is not available.

Information Sharing

20. The local protocols for sharing information and raising child protection concerns should not change. Where any person becomes aware of the risk of significant harm to a child from

abuse or neglect, then Police (if the danger is imminent) or Social Work should be alerted without delay.

Inter-agency referral discussion

21. An Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) should continue to be the formal starting point for the process of information sharing, assessment, analysis and decision making following a reported concern about abuse or neglect of a child. The decision to convene an IRD can be made by Police, Health or Social Work.

22. The IRD does not need to involve face-to-face meetings, and e-IRD, secure email, telephone discussion and tele-conferencing are all appropriate. Key practitioners in Police, Social Work and Health must be involved, and information should be sought from other agencies, including appropriate staff from schools or the Education service.

23. As ever, where there is the likelihood of immediate risk or significant harm to a child, intervention should not be delayed pending receipt of information. Agencies should take necessary immediate action.

Investigation and assessment

24. When, following Inter-agency Referral Discussion, a child protection investigation is required, the child's immediate experience and needs must be ascertained. Direct contact with the child and an understanding of their living environment remains essential. Guidance for social workers sets out how this can be managed safely.

25. If considered appropriate and if there is good reason in order to take action and access services promptly, assessments can be undertaken using the partial assessment format that is enabled by the Coronavirus Act 2020 and described in the guidance: Coronavirus (COVID 19): Changes to Social Care Assessments.

26. Where the IRD leads to a decision to undertake a medical examination, health colleagues should ensure that this is carried out in a clinically appropriate time scale.

27. There is no change to the arrangements for Joint Paediatric/Forensic Medical Examinations of children and young people.

28. Where they are required, Joint Investigative Interviews should continue to be visually recorded and undertaken by Police and Social Work together. Consideration must be given to social distancing and the emotional impact this may have.

Child assessment and Child protection orders

29. The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 makes changes to the provisions for Child Assessment and Child Protection Orders. These are detailed in the guidance on the Act.

Compulsory supervision orders, secure care and place of safety placements

30. The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 provides additional flexibility in processes for determining compulsory supervision orders, secure care and place of safety placements. This is detailed in the guidance on the Act.

Child Protection Planning Meetings

31. In the current circumstances, it will not often be possible for child protection planning meetings (or case conferences) to take place with all of the relevant parties meeting in the same venue at the same time. Instead, Child Protection Committees should consider other ways for such meetings to be held, using tele-conferences or new technology.

32. Where planning meetings have to be limited to core participants, other members of the team around the child should continue to be included in decision making processes, for example through telephone contact or secure email, and a record of this should be maintained. Children, parents and carers should have a choice about how or whether they participate, which could include by teleconference, email or a recorded message.

It remains critical, that:

33. Decision-making about child protection planning is informed by relevant stakeholders, including the child and family. The lead professional continues to co-ordinate the assessment and plan, and ensures actions are followed through, and communicated effectively with all members of the team around the child.

34. Child Protection Committees should ensure that means are in place for any member of the team around the child to escalate concerns, if they believe that actions are not being progressed in accordance with the child's best interests, and they feel that this has not been properly considered in the child planning process.

Timescales

35. While the national guidance includes timescales for child protection processes, account should be taken of the unprecedented challenges at this time, and there can be flexibility based on risk and circumstances, taking account of the need for prompt action to protect children.

36. Aspects of the organisation of Children's Hearings, including to facilitate remote attendance, are addressed in the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 and detailed in the guidance on the Act.

37. Many timescales are determined by the period between meetings. Ongoing, high quality liaison between practitioners, that is documented and where the key aspects are included in an updated child's plan, will lessen the need to keep to strict timescales for meetings.

38. Timescales for many formal processes, including reporting to a Children's Hearing, can be more easily achieved by the streamlining of requirements on agencies to provide multiple reports and focus on the submission of the child's plan.

39. Only those Hearings required for the urgent and immediate protection of a child will take place during this period, and they will take place remotely. Children's Hearings Scotland has issued detailed guidance which sets out how remote hearings will be arranged and conducted, which will be of use to practitioners who attend hearings and support families to take part.

40. SCRA and Children's Hearings Scotland have also issued a joint statement summarising the current arrangements, including regarding contact directions in Compulsory Supervision Orders.

Child Protection Register

41. Local authorities are responsible for maintaining a Child Protection Register for those children who are the subject of an inter-agency child protection plan. This must be kept accurate and up to date.

42. The decision to place a child's name on the register should be taken following careful consideration of the facts and circumstances. In the current situation, this decision may require to be made through multi-agency consensus rather than a meeting. This might happen at IRD or subsequently by agreement of locally identified managers in Health, Police and Social Work. In such cases, these managers should take account of the views of the

team around the child, medical and other specialist advice, and the particular perspectives of the child and family. The reasons for the decision should be documented in child's plans and agency records.

43. This more flexible process should not allow any widening of the criteria for child protection registration, which continues to be that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child has suffered or will suffer significant harm from abuse or neglect, and that a child protection plan is needed to protect and support the child.

44. There should always be a good reason for a child to continue on the register. The review process and timescale can be considered at the point of registration. De-registration should occur when a child no longer requires a child protection plan. Means should be identified to ensure that the de-registration process continues to take place timeously.

Keeping children safe

45. A child protection plan must set out the actions required to reduce risk for any child who is considered to be at risk of significant harm. It is these actions that protect the child.

46. It is recognised that practitioners will already be responding to the particular challenges of the Covid-19 outbreak, taking account of the child and family circumstances. For example, this might include: how parents with a drug dependency and/or mental health difficulties are accessing medication and support to maintain stability; ensuring updated safety plans are in place for women experiencing domestic abuse; being clear about how parents with a learning disability are receiving advice and consistent support to protect their children in these circumstances; and help for families experiencing poverty to access fresh food for their children.

47. As part of any child protection plan, the lead professional and/or others must always have sufficiently regular direct contact with the child and family. The guidance for social workers on home visits and direct contact interviews with service users recognises the need for home visits and direct contact, to provide support, prevent significant harm and/or to fulfil a statutory duty.

48. Practice guidance has also been issued for staff in residential child care settings. There is also advice on coronavirus testing for children being moved between or to new care placements.

Engagement with children and families who are self-isolating or shielding a child or carer

49. Public health guidance on shielding states that other household members do not need to shield. In the event of a child living in a home where an adult is shielding, practitioners should be able to see the child. If a shielding child needs to be seen, medical advice should be sought.

50. If a child or family member is in self-isolation, practitioners should ascertain if the individual has symptoms prior to direct contact. It may become necessary to defer some home visits and alternative arrangements can be put in place, such as telephone and email contact or the use of appropriate applications on mobile devices.

51. However, it will be necessary for social workers and/or other practitioners to see children and other family members on a sufficiently regular basis, and it will continue to be important to have direct contact when there are sufficient concerns about injuries or other immediate harm. In all cases, public health guidance should be followed.

Child's Plan and other records

52. Given that there will be more diverse approaches to communications and decision-making processes at this time with the likelihood of further changes as Covid-19 progresses, it is essential that the lead professional maintains an accurate and up to date child protection plan within the child's plan, and a clear chronology of all processes and key decisions.

53. The current child's plan should always be available to the team around the child.

54. All other practitioners should also ensure effective record keeping, including their own engagement in these processes, and with children and families.

Adult Support and Protection

55. Supplementary guidance has been published regarding adult support and protection. As ever, it remains important to ensure good liaison and effective decision making, where there is involvement of practitioners from both children's and adult services, and in planning for transitions.

Conclusion

56. These are unprecedented times, but good professional judgement and good practice will help keep Scotland's children safe.

57. This supplementary guidance will remain under review, and through consultation with stakeholders, updated guidance will be provided if necessary as the current situation develops.

Appendix B

Safeguarding and Welfare of Children



Incident Reporting – Member of the Public

<u>Name:</u> <u>(Person reporting the incident)</u>	
<u>Address:</u>	
<u>Telephone Number:</u>	
<u>Date:</u>	

Type of Incident: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Injury• Physical Neglect• Sexual Abuse• Emotional Abuse	Incident Date:
<u>Notification of Concern - Details:</u> <i>(Who?/What?/Where?/When)</i>	

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Member of the Public)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Member of Staff)

Name: (Pupil)	
Date of Birth:	
Stage/Class:	
Teacher:	
Parent/Carer:	
Is the child on the Child Protection Register?	YES NO
Have there been previous Notifications of Concern?	YES NO Date:

Name: (Person concern raised against)	
Relationship to Child:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	

Name: (Member of Staff recording details)	
Designation:	
Name: (Member of Staff investigating incident)	
Designation:	
Action – No Further Action:	<u>Details:</u>
Action – Agency reported to:	SOCIAL WORK POLICE OTHER -
Date Reported:	
Name: (Agency Representative)	

Details of advice given:		
Has the parent/carer been advised of the concern?	YES Date:	NO

Appendix C

Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class – Reflection Room

Child's Name:		Date:	
Class:		Member of Staff:	

UNCRC (United Nations on the Rights of the Child) – Rights Respecting Schools

Article 2	All children have these rights no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents/carers do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.	FAMILY & LOVE
Article 12	You have the right to give your opinion and for adults to listen and take it seriously.	HONESTY & RESPONSIBILITY
Article 15	You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.	FRIENDSHIP FORGIVENESS
Article 16	You have the right to privacy.	RESPECT
Article 19	You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body and mind.	RESPONSIBILITY
Article 28	You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.	PERSEVERANCE
Article 29	Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.	RESPECT & GRATITUDE
Article 31	You have the right to play and rest.	FRIENDSHIP & GENEROSITY
Article 37	No-one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.	LOVE & RESPECT
Article 39	You have the right to help if you are hurt, neglected or badly treated.	LOVE & RESPONSIBILITY

Whole School Charter (Pupil Voice)

We should move and work quietly in all areas of our school.

We should ensure we do not hurt anyone.

We should always speak respectfully to children and adults.

We should follow instructions the first time they are given.

We should listen carefully when someone is talking.

We should respect everyone's right to privacy.

In Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class, we follow our Anti-Bullying and Positive Relationships Policy to ensure all children are treated with kindness, fairness and respect. The United Nations Articles highlight the rights, and responsibilities, all children have in our school and nursery, and the importance we place on our values. We want to work in partnership with our families to ensure we can achieve our goal and thank you for your support.

Please read, sign and date below, returning to school the day after the 'blue slip' was issued. Children will attend Reflection Room to allow all children involved to reflect on their words and actions, agreeing on next steps to continue to build positive friendships and relationships.

What happened & Next Steps

--

Empty rectangular box for text input.

Parent/Carer Comments

Empty rectangular box for parent/carers to provide comments.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____