

Bothwellpark High School



Child Protection Policy August 2023

Any concerns around Child Protection should be brought immediately to the attention of the Child Protection Co-ordinator. In Bothwellpark High School, this is Julie Connell-Beaton Depute Head Teacher. In the Depute Head Teacher's absence, direct the concern to Michael McGinley Head Teacher and in the Head Teacher's absence, direct concern to John Bradshaw Acting Depute Head Teacher.

Rationale

All children have a right to be safe and protected from abuse and neglect, therefore all staff are responsible for safeguarding and child protection. The shared responsibilities of *Education and Families* and other agency employees are to protect children from abuse and exploitation, to respond appropriately when abuse is identified and to ensure whenever possible that all children are able to exercise their right to be raised in a warm, stimulating and safe environment with the support of staff, their families and carers. It is the clear responsibility of all those involved in our school to adopt good practice throughout their work. **(For further information refer to Child Protection tile on Glow)**

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide advice and guidelines for staff in relation to issues of child protection and the health and wellbeing of the children in our school. The main purposes of the policy are:

- to identify the roles and responsibilities in the care and protection of our pupils
- to provide guidance and support to staff in carrying out their role and responsibilities in the protection of our pupils

Procedures

- all staff are issued with a copy of the Child Protection Action Guidance Leaflet and receive an annual Child Protection update on August in-service days. A copy is also displayed on the staff noticeboard
- in addition, new staff are also required to complete the 'Child Protection pack 2023 if they join during the school year and have this signed off by the Child Protection Co-ordinator
- the procedures outlined in this policy must be followed meticulously at all times and by all staff and should be implemented in conjunction with **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021**. A copy of this guidance is available for all stakeholders in the CP tile on Glow.
- Staff have access to relevant plans, reports, support information as required for them to carry out their duties.

Roles and Responsibilities

In **Bothwellpark High School** the Head of Establishment has overall responsibility for all child protection issues. These responsibilities include the following:

- ensuring that **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 and North Lanarkshire Council Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures** are brought to the attention of all staff on an annual basis, that staff have access to the guidance and are issued with the Child Protection Action Guidance Leaflet and that a copy of the leaflet is displayed on the staffroom wall
- ensuring that all staff know the name of the child protection co-ordinator in the establishment and who to speak to in his/her absence
- developing establishment policy and practice to meet national and local authority guidance
- ensuring child protection training for all staff

- developing a school ethos and learning opportunities which promote the safety and wellbeing of all children
- completing and returning all Child Protection paperwork as outlined in local guidance

All Staff

It is everyone's responsibility to keep children safe therefore **all** school staff have an active role to play. All staff must adhere to the code of conduct for NLC and their professional associations as appropriate. All staff are expected to actively create an environment that reduces stress and risk according to the TCI and nurturing principles that underpin our school ethos.

In Bothwellpark High School, some children have limited verbal communication. We therefore have to be vigilant for changes in presentation and behaviour. Small changes should be recorded in case a pattern of behaviour emerges that may indicate underlying concerns.

In terms of child protection, staff should be aware of the following grounds for concern, which can arise from a wide range of circumstances but will generally be covered by the following events:

Grounds for Concern:

- a child states that abuse has taken place or the child feels unsafe
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received
- a child's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statement cause suspicion of abuse
- a child reports an incident of abuse which occurred some time ago
- staff witness abuse

Responding to Grounds for Concern:

- any grounds for concern should be reported immediately to **Julie Connell-Beaton** Depute Head Teacher. If Julie is not available, then **Michael McGinley** Head Teacher should be informed. If Michael is not available, then **John Bradshaw** Acting Depute Head Teacher should be informed.
- if there is 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 Co-ordinator in relation to recording concerns, supporting the child, co-operating with subsequent actions to investigate the grounds for concern, and protecting the child or children concerned
- all information recording must be relevant, accurate, signed and dated as it may become a legal document. Please ensure the child's name and date of birth are accurately recorded. The information should include a clear, succinct chronology of events, all relevant factual information and a summary of the employee response and any agreements reached.
- staff should provide an accurate report for the child protection co-ordinator when requested

- it is essential that there is no delay in initiating child protection procedures even where the Child Protection Co-ordinator is absent or not available. In such circumstances staff should speak to Michael McGinley HT or John Bradshaw, Acting DHT. Further support is available from the named person service at namedpersonservice@northlan.gov.uk

Supporting the Child

During any disclosure of abuse by a child staff should respond in a sensitive and supportive manner. The following strategies should be adopted:

- listen with care
- treat the allegation in a serious manner
- reassure the child that he or she is right to tell
- affirm the child's feelings as expressed by the child
- do not give a guarantee of confidentiality or secrecy
- do not ask leading questions
- ask open ended questions which seek to clarify information already given
- do not interrogate the child
- do not show disbelief
- do not be judgmental
- do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse
- do not display strong emotions

What happens next?

A medical emergency should be reported immediately to medical services and, if required, first aid should be administered before reporting the incident to the senior social worker.

Child abuse is a criminal offence. Urgent circumstances may require help from the police, for example to immediately avoid further abuse, to ensure the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser or to avoid destruction of evidence. The child's allocated Social Worker or Duty Worker for the area in which they live will be notified by the responsible member of management.

The grounds for concern and action taken should be recorded, signed and dated (on the same day) using Appendix 2. Two copies should be sent immediately as indicated on the form. The copy retained in the establishment should be stored in the Wellbeing application on Seemis. Grounds for concern to be recorded on Seemis pastoral notes, and logged to be part of the child's chronology if appropriate.

For concerns that are not emergencies, the responsible member of management will contact the child's allocated worker or duty worker. This may be as a result of buildup of concerns that have been brought to them and recorded on pastoral notes. The social worker will advise on next steps. The police may investigate and may initiate an 'Interagency referral discussion' through a teams call. The purpose of the IRD is to ensure that key agencies/services are involved in the initial sharing and analysing of information to inform a collective decision about whether a notification of child protection concern should proceed

to a child protection investigation. This ensures a collective responsibility and consistent involvement by police, social work, health and education staff in sharing information and assessing risks and a single record of joint decision making.

Co-operating with Agencies involved in Child Protection Process

Following reporting and recording of concerns staff should co-operate fully with subsequent investigations and support plans as directed by the head of establishment and in consultation with the appropriate agency representatives. This may include attendance at case discussions, child protection conferences and reviews.

Dealing with child protection issues can have stressful consequences for employees. Education and Family Services have a duty of care to all employees. Support can be accessed through the Staff Welfare Officer, Nicola Harvie.

Useful Resources

(Resources can all be found within the Child Protection folder on Glow)

- NLC Multi Agency Child Protection Procedures, 2023
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021
- Action Guidance Leaflet
- Child Protection Pack 2023
- Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD) protocol, 2022

Review Date – August 2024