

Learning and Leisure Services

Child Protection - Action Guidance

Protecting children from harm is a major priority.

All children and young people have a right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected. It is everyone's responsibility to protect children and young people.



Grounds for concern - action guidance for all employees

The identification and protection of children at risk of abuse or those who have been abused should be treated as a priority. North Lanarkshire's Child and Adult Protection Procedures and Guidance will ensure a common, clearly understood framework within which Learning and Leisure Services will act.

1 **Welfare Principle**

All action should be taken in the best interests of the child or children. Good practice which protects children requires the careful exercise of professional knowledge, judgement and skill.

2 **Proof is NOT required.**

3 **Secrets should NOT be kept.**

4 **Grounds for Concern**

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

- a child states that abuse has taken place or that the child feels unsafe
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received
- a child's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing, or statement(s) cause suspicion of abuse

If you don't share your concerns a child may be harmed.

5 **Action Points for all Employees**

- immediately report any grounds for concern to the Head of Establishment/ Service Manager/Child Protection Co-ordinator
- do not wait to gather evidence
- do not keep information secret
- do not discuss the matter with others



- you must provide a handwritten record of the incident
- you must date and sign the record of the incident
- follow the guidance given by the Head of Establishment/Service Manager/Child Protection Co-ordinator

6 Supporting the Child

When a child is disclosing abuse the employee should respond in the following ways:

- listen and observe with care
- treat the allegation in a serious manner
- reassure the child that he/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
- seek clarification using open ended questions only
- do not interrogate the child
- do not show disbelief
- do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse
- avoid displaying strong emotions

7 Action Points for Heads of Establishments/Service Managers/Child Protection Co-ordinators

Heads of establishments/service managers/co-ordinators should follow the action points below:

- act promptly
- treat the grounds for concern as a priority action
- consider the immediate needs of all children involved
- gather information and if appropriate seek clarification (not proof)
- ask staff to record all relevant information
- immediately report the grounds for concern to the duty senior social worker at the local area office
- immediately report a medical emergency to the medical services and administer first aid if required
- support the child or children involved as necessary and appropriate
- if appropriate, contact the police
- record (on the same day) the grounds for concern and action taken using the Notification of Concern (Child Protection) form
- send two copies as detailed on the form
- co-operate fully with all statutory agencies who may become involved
- information should be recorded appropriately and case files should be managed effectively.
- alleged involvement of any employee in child abuse should be reported to the Executive Director of Learning and Leisure Services or the appropriate Head of Service

7.1 Pupil Progress Records/Child Protection Files/Health and Wellbeing Files

- significant changes, events and decisions should be recorded and monitored within the appropriate file
- ensure compliance with Management Circulars C2 Pupil Progress Records and C5 Child Protection
- at transition stages all pupil records must be transferred to the receiving school

7.2 In the absence of senior management, employees should know how to initiate a Notification of Concern (Child Protection). If all else fails employees should contact the Education Officer, (Support for Learning) or the Development Officer, (Child Protection).

8 Co-operating

Employees should co-operate fully with enquiries, investigations and support plans as directed by the head of establishment/service manager and as requested by statutory agencies. Employees should provide reports, attend case discussions, case conferences and reviews.

9 What will happen to the child and family?

Once enquiries have been completed, one or more of the following might happen:

- no further action
- support or advice offered to the family
- request for a service from another agency
- assistance requested from an appropriate legal agency such as the Children's Reporter
- where child protection concerns are identified a multi-agency meeting, known as a Child Protection Case Conference, will be held to decide the best way to protect the child and support the family.



August 2013

Employees may access advice and support from:

Education Officer, (Support for Learning)
or the Development Officer, (Child Protection)
or Staff Welfare Officer.

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