



Hilltop Primary School, LCSC & Nursery

# Child Protection Policy



January 2025

**Any concerns regarding Child Protection should be brought immediately to the attention of the Child Protection Co-ordinator. At Hilltop Primary and Nursery Class, this role is fulfilled by **Ed Clinton**, Acting Head Teacher.**

**In the event of the Head Teacher's absence, concerns should be directed to the Depute Head Teachers, **Miss Elspeth Roddick** or **Miss Laura McGhee**.**

## **Rationale**

All children have inherent rights, as outlined in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#), which include the right to be protected from abuse and neglect. This aligns with [Article 19](#) of the UNCRC, which specifically addresses the right of every child to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation. Therefore, safeguarding children and young people is a duty shared by all.

In accordance with the updated [National Guidance on Child Protection in Scotland \(2023\)](#), aligned with the principles of [Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#), it is imperative that Education & Families and other relevant agencies have a duty and responsibility to work together to protect children from harm and exploitation. This includes promptly identifying and responding to instances of abuse, and striving to provide each child with a nurturing, stimulating, and secure environment. These efforts should be supported by practitioners, families, and caregivers. Upholding these standards is crucial in all aspects of our educational establishments to ensure the wellbeing and protection of every child. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in our school to consistently adopt and implement effective practices in their respective roles.

Following the National Guidance update, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) has created a digital document that contains revised policies, practice guidance as well as up to date SharePoint resources which can be accessed through the following link:

[NLC Child Protection Practice Guide](#)

## **Whistleblowing**

All organisations that work with children are required to have policies and procedures in place that allow individuals to escalate a child protection concern outside of their management structure. Senior managers and child protection coordinators are required to deal with child protection concerns appropriately, this includes not minimising or dismissing allegations of harm. Senior managers could also be suspected of harming a child or young person. If you need to escalate a concern, please contact –

- **Police Scotland on 999** in an emergency or 101 for non-emergencies (0141 308 1070) without delay if a child or young person is at risk of harm.

Please ensure that the [Whistleblowing Poster](#) is prominently displayed on the staff noticeboard.

## **What happens next?**

You should –

- Record the name and details of the person you made the referral to.
- Ask them to give you feedback on your referral where this is possible (and it does not prejudice any legal action).

## **What happens when social work/police receive your referral?**

On receipt of a referral social work and or police will carry out an initial assessment of the information. Where the information indicates a very low level of concern the matter may be diverted to a single agency for appropriate action, or to multi-agency partners to coordinate a plan for a Child in Need.

Where it is deemed to be a child protection matter, child protection procedures will be implemented. The receiving agency social work and or police will -

- Treat every referral seriously gather information available, assess and analyse this jointly and make decisions based on the information.
- Jointly assess the situation and determine how best to progress the matter, the welfare of the child will always be of paramount consideration.
- Identify who will be responsible for feeding back to the referrer.
- Agree the need to arrange an Initial Referral Discussion to plan the child protection investigation.
- Consider the need for any emergency legal measures required or statutory measures via a referral to the Children's Reporter.

## **Aim**

The purpose of this policy is to offer guidance and guidelines to staff regarding child protection and the health and wellbeing of the children in our school. The policy aims to achieve the following:

- Raise staff awareness about the different forms of abuse and the signs that may indicate abuse is occurring.
- Establish the roles and responsibilities for the care and protection of our pupils.
- Provide guidance and support to staff members as they fulfil their roles and responsibilities in protecting the children and young people in our school.

## **Procedures**

The following procedures are established to ensure comprehensive adherence to child protection protocols within our school establishment:

- All staff are required to review the NLC Multiagency Child Protection Procedures as required, with the initial update being mandatory on the August in-service days.
- All staff should regularly review the practice guidance and refer to the NLC SharePoint for any updates or relevant information.
- New staff members should be directed to the NLC Multiagency Child Protection Procedures and complete mandatory training.
- Relevant posters such as Whistleblowing, NLC Child Protection Grounds for Concern flowchart, and the IRD flowchart should be prominently displayed on the staff noticeboard.

It is imperative that the procedures outlined in this policy are adhered to diligently by all staff members, at all times. These procedures are to be implemented in collaboration with the **NLC Multiagency Child Protection Procedures**. A digital version of this guidance is available to all stakeholders on the NLC SharePoint.

## **What is child abuse and child neglect?**

[The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2023\)](#), issued by the Scottish Government, states that child abuse and child neglect are forms of maltreatment. The National Guidance goes on to state that:

*‘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 and drug use.’* (Scottish Government, online, p12)

Further information and definitions of abuse or neglect are provided in the National Guidance document which is incorporated into the NLC Multiagency Child Protection Procedures ([see Appendix A](#)).

### **Indicators of Risk**

The following circumstances are recognised as indicators that a child may face an elevated risk of harm within their families:

- Poverty
- Resistance and disguised compliance (non-engaging families)
- Disability (disabled children – physical, emotional, developmental, learning, communication, and healthcare needs)
- Parental disability (learning or otherwise)
- Mental health or health problems (parental or child)
- Suicide and self-harming
- Emotional abuse and neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Parental problematic alcohol and drug misuse
- Obesity
- Child sexual abuse (CSA) (involving a child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) (a form of CSA in which a person or persons of any age take advantage of a power imbalance and force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity, in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse)
- Digital environment/online safety (including harmful online challenges and hoaxes)
- Children who are looked after away from home (placed with kinship carers, foster carers, prospective adopters, residential school setting, or in residential care in a children’s house)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Honour-based abuse and forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness (parent or caregiver induces illness or a sick role in a child by exaggeration, deliberate non-treatment, fabrication or falsification or signs of illness)
- Death of a child (sudden unexpected death in infants and children)
- Cultural and faith communities
- Radicalisation

Please refer to [Part 4 of the National Guidance](#) for more in-depth information on the above circumstances, available from page 137 onwards.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Hilltop Primary School, LCSC and Nursery Class, the Head of Establishment holds ultimate responsibility for all child protection matters. These responsibilities include the following:

- Ensuring that the **NLC Multiagency Child Protection Procedures** are reviewed as required, with all staff consistently reviewing the practice guidance, to maintain clarity and keep everyone up to date. Providing them with access to the NLC SharePoint for any updates or relevant information is also important. Additionally, it is crucial to ensure that a copy of relevant posters is prominently displayed on the staff noticeboard. This will help ensure that staff are aware of important information and can refer to it easily.
- Ensuring that all staff are acquainted with the Child Protection Coordinator within the establishment and know whom to contact in their absence.
- Formulating establishment policies and practices in accordance with the national and local authority guidance.
- Facilitating child protection training for all staff.
- Fostering a school culture and learning environment which has children's rights at the centre, promoting the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Timely completion and submission of all child protection documentation as stipulated in local protocols and guidance.

## **All Staff**

Ensuring the safety of children and young people is a collective responsibility, making it imperative for **all** school staff to actively participate in maintaining a secure environment.

In terms of child protection, staff should be aware of the following indicators of concern, which may stem from various situations but will generally be covered by the following events:

### **Grounds for Concern:**

- **Disclosure by the child:** A child may directly disclose that they have experienced abuse or feel unsafe.
- **Third-party allegations:** Reports or allegations of abuse from other individuals, such as concerned adults, witnesses, or anonymous sources.
- **Observable signs:** Suspicious or concerning indicators observed by adults, including changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, or statements as well as any unusual drawings or play activities that may suggest abuse.
- **Historical disclosures:** Reports of past incidents of abuse shared by the child, even if they have occurred some time ago.
- **Staff witnessing abuse:** Instances where school staff directly witness or become aware of abusive behaviour or harmful situations involving a child.

Identifying and addressing grounds for concern are crucial steps in protecting children and ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Prompt reporting and appropriate action are essential to safeguarding children from potential harm.

### **Responding to Grounds for Concern:**

- **Immediate Action:** Take immediate steps to ensure the safety and protection of the child(ren). Any grounds for concern should be reported immediately to the head of the

establishment. Under no circumstances should staff inform a parent about the situation at this stage.

- **Documentation:** Document all details related to the grounds for concern, including the nature of the concern, any disclosures made by the child, observations, and any actions taken in response. Staff must not delay in reporting concerns to gather evidence, nor should they agree to keep the information secret or discuss the matter with others.
- **Reporting/Recording:** Staff are required to adhere to the guidance provided by the head of establishment regarding the recording of concerns, providing support to the child, cooperating with subsequent investigation actions, and ensuring the protection of the child(ren) involved. All recorded information must be pertinent, precise, signed, and dated, as it may hold legal significance. It is imperative to accurately record the child's name and date of birth. The recorded information should entail a clear and concise chronology of events, all relevant factual details, and a summary of the staff member's response and any agreements made. The information should be provided for the Child Protection Coordinator upon request.

Prompt initiation of child protection procedures is imperative, even in cases where the head of establishment is absent or unavailable. In such instances, staff should communicate with the designated Depute Head Teachers. Additional assistance can be sought from the Child Protection Development Officer, Michael Bradley, who is available by email at [bradleymic@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:bradleymic@northlan.gov.uk) and by telephone on **07816 200095**.

### **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 attentively and with care.
- Treat the allegation seriously and respectfully.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by sharing their experience.
- Validate the child's feelings as expressed by them.
- Refrain from providing guarantees of confidentiality or secrecy.
- Avoid asking leading questions that may influence the child's response.
- Use open-ended questions to seek clarification on information already provided.
- Avoid interrogating the child(ren) or pressuring them for details.
- Refrain from displaying disbelief or scepticism.
- Maintain a non-judgmental attitude.
- Avoid sharing personal or third-party experiences of abuse.
- Keep emotions in check and avoid displaying strong emotional reactions.

### **What happens next?**

In the event of a medical emergency, it is crucial to notify medical services immediately. If necessary, administer first aid before reporting the incident to the senior social worker.

Child abuse constitutes a criminal offense. Urgent situations may necessitate involving the police, such as to prevent further abuse, ensure the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, or prevent the destruction of evidence.

The grounds for concern and any subsequent actions taken must be promptly recorded, signed, and dated on the same day using the Notification of Concern (NoC) documentation, as outlined in [Appendix 2](#). Two copies should be sent immediately as indicated on the form. The copy retained within the establishment should be securely stored in the confidential child file, which is typically kept in the Head Teacher's office. Additionally, the grounds for concern should be recorded as a significant event in [SEEMiS pastoral notes](#).



After receiving a NOC, the police will conduct an investigation and may initiate an Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) through a teleconference call. The aim of the IRD is to facilitate the involvement of key agencies and services in sharing and analysing information initially. This collective effort informs a joint decision regarding whether a notification of child protection concern warrants further investigation. This approach ensures collective responsibility and consistent engagement by police, social work, health, and education staff in sharing information, assessing risks and maintaining a unified record of decision making.

### **Co-operating with Agencies involved in Child Protection Process**

Following the reporting and recording of concerns, staff are expected to fully cooperate with subsequent investigations and support plans as directed by the head of establishment, in consultation with the appropriate agency representatives. This may involve attending case discussions, child protection conferences and reviews.

Handling child protection issues can have significant emotional and psychological impacts on employees. Education & Families recognise their duty of care to all staff members. Support services are available through the Staff Welfare Officer, Nicola Harvie at [Harvienic@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:Harvienic@northlan.gov.uk) to assist employees during such challenging times. If you feel you or any of your colleagues need support in this area, please see support offered by North Lanarkshire Council by accessing the following links:

- [Health & Wellbeing Support for Employees – My NL](#)
- [Talk about it | Work well NL](#)

### **Conclusion**

All children have the right to receive care and protection, which includes being kept safe from abuse and harm. This should be done in a safe environment that respects their rights, as stated in the UNCRC. By following the procedures outlined in this policy and seeking guidance from local and national policies, we can ensure that we are vigilant in safeguarding our pupils and promoting their health and wellbeing, in alignment with the principles of the UNCRC.

Further information and resources are available within the [NLC Child Protection Practice Guide \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Version	Date	Summary of changes from previous version	Name	Date of Next Review
01	15/06/2024	Sample school policy has been updated and reviewed in line with National Guidance	Katrina Donnelly	August 2025
02	22/01/2025	Policy updated to reflect current SLT changes in the school.	Ed Clinton	August 2025.