

Plains Primary 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 Plains Primary School this is Adrienne Dickson, Head Teacher. In the Head Teacher's absence, direct the concern to Gail Wilson (PT)

Introduction

Plains Primary School is committed to the protection of children and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children as of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable children from exploitative relationships.

Plains Primary School Staff consider it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

For further information refer to NLC Management Circular C5 on First Class.

Who needs protection?

Children and young people under the age of 18.

Aim

All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect, therefore child protection is the responsibility of everyone. The shared responsibilities of Families and Education 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.

The aim of this policy is to 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 raise staff awareness of the categories of abuse and the indicators which could signify that abuse is taking place
- To identify the roles and responsibilities in the care and protection of our pupils
- To provide guidance and support to staff carrying out their role and responsibilities in the protection of our pupils.

The procedures outlined in this policy must be followed meticulously at all times and by all staff, and should be implemented in conjunction with Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines. A copy of this guidance is kept in the Head Teacher's office.

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.
- In addition new staff also require to complete the 'Understanding Child protection Self Learning Pack' and have this signed off by the Head Teacher.

Child Abuse

Child protection means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. The definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Government guidance states: "Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child." (Para 32). This online document provides the following definitions of some of the ways in which children may experience abuse.

There are different types of abuse:

- Physical abuse - hitting, kicking, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- Neglect - may involve a parent or carer failing to provide for a child's basic needs, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, not ensuring access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect also incorporates 'non-organic failure to thrive' where a child has significantly failed to meet their normal development and growth milestones and there are no known genetic or medical reasons for this.
- Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities which may involve physical contact but which also applies to non-contact sexual activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, indecent images. It includes using sexual language to a child or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Emotional abuse - may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, they may be constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child but can occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Indicators of Risk

The following circumstances are considered to be indicators that a child may be at increased risk of harm within their families:

Domestic abuse

Parental problematic alcohol and drug misuse

Non-engaging families

Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems

Children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviour

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Honour based violence and forced marriage

Fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen by proxy)

Sudden unexpected death in infants and children

Further detailed information on all of the above circumstances can be found within Part 4 of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (page 113). This can be accessed online at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450733.pdf>

The above guidance also provides information about ways in which children and young people can come to harm outside of the home and in specific circumstances e.g.

Child trafficking

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Online and mobile phone safety

Further detailed information on these and other specific circumstances can also be found within Part 4 of the National Guidance (Page 139).

Roles and Responsibilities

In Plains Primary School the Head Teacher has overall responsibility for all child protection issues. These responsibilities include the following:

- ensuring that the North Lanarkshire Child and Adult Protection Procedures and Guidance 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 within this establishment.

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 the Head Teacher – Mrs Dickson, or if she is unavailable then the Principal Teacher - Mrs Wilson. On no account should staff tell a parent about what has happened at this stage.
- 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 head of establishment 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 head of establishment is absent or not available. In such circumstances staff should speak to the nominated PT. Further support is available from the Education Officer (Support for Learning) or Development Officer (Child Protection) at Education Families Headquarters.

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 grounds for concern and action taken should be recorded, signed and dated (on the same day) using Appendix 2 Notification of Concern (NOC). Two copies should be sent immediately as indicated on the form. The copy retained in the establishment should be stored in the confidential child file (located in our school office). Grounds for concern to be recorded on Seemis pastoral notes.

Following a Notification of Concern (NOC) the police will investigate and may initiate an 'Initial Referral Discussion' (IRD) through a teleconference 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.

It is essential that there is no delay in initiating protection procedures even **where the child protection co-ordinator is absent** from the establishment. In this circumstance, staff should contact either the Principal Teacher, Airdrie Social Work and speak to the Duty Officer (01236 757000), For advice contact Lindsey Mitchell, Child Protection Development Officer, Education and Families Tel: (01236) 812294 or Mobile: 07939 284756

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. Families and Education have a duty of care to all employees. Support can be accessed through the Staff Welfare Officer.

Training and awareness

Employees / volunteers will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy, and their responsibilities in relation to the child protection process.

- Through the provision of training
 - Inset training and awareness raising materials (NLC)
 - Understanding Child Protection - Self Learning Pack (NLC)
 - Child Protection Action Guidance Leaflet (NLC)
 - Coordinators meetings
 - Multi agency training opportunities
- By issuing or ensuring access to a copy of the policy to all new staff members.
- Publicising its existence in strategic parts of the school

Staff can access this policy at all times on our Plains PS Microsoft team or from the Head Teacher's Office. In addition, staff can access National Guidance and North Lanarkshire Guidance folders located in the HT's office.

These procedures outline how all organisations work together to identify, investigate and respond to child protection concerns.

Prevention

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

The school will therefore:

- regularly engage the children in promoting their understanding of their rights under the Health and Wellbeing indicators of GIRFEC;
- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are listened to;
- ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and the knowledge of how and where they can seek help;
- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.

In order to achieve this we will:

- Seek to work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies and North Lanarkshire Council to promote good practice in the area of child protection
- Ensure pupil records are updated and shared with relevant agencies
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location
- Ensure that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed
- Update any changes in child protection policy and practice under the guidance from the designated person in the school
- Endeavour to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate child protection training, supervision and support in order to implement this policy effectively and with the minimum of stress. The policy will be reviewed each session with all teaching / non teaching staff and with staff who are new to the school

Conclusion

All children have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected. By being aware of and following the procedures in this policy and by referring to local and national guidance we can remain vigilant in protecting our pupils and promoting their Health and Wellbeing.

Useful Resources which can all be found within the Child Protection folder on First Class

NLC Child and Adult Protection Procedures and Guidance (2013)

Action Guidance Leaflet

Understanding Child Protection Self Learning Pack 2016

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) Guidance

Important Contacts and Telephone Numbers

Social Work Area Team- Coatbridge	01236 757000
Social Work Emergency Services (Out of Hours)	0800 121 4114
Police	101
Education and Families Child Protection Development Officer Lindsey Mitchell	Tel: 01236 812294 Mobile: 07939 284756

Review Schedule

Policy Update August 2023

Policy Review Date August 2024