

Stane Primary School and Nursery Class



Child Protection Policy

August 2025

Any concerns around Child Protection should be brought immediately to the attention of the Child Protection Co-ordinator. In Stane Primary and Nursery Class, this is Laura Simpson, Head Teacher. In the Head Teacher's absence, direct the concern to Mr O'Donnell, Acting Depute Head Teacher.



Education and Families

The purpose of the Child Protection Policy

Stane Primary School and Nursery Class recognises that it has an explicit duty to safeguard and protect children from abuse and neglect as defined in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/documents/>

The overall intention and purpose behind the school's child protection policy is underpinned by the fundamental principles of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):

'The welfare of the child is paramount'.

This guidance is used in conjunction with North Lanarkshire Council's Management Circular C5, Child Protection and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014 which are available on request.

Everyone in our school shares an objective to help keep children safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children to learn in.
- Supporting children's development in ways that will foster a sense of self-esteem and independence.
- Identifying and responding to children in need of support and/or protection.
- Working in a manner that places the safety and wellbeing of pupils at the forefront.

School Commitment

- 1) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- 2) Ensure all children have effective means of communication with more than one adult in the school.
- 3) Give opportunities for class or group discussions of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- 4) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE/Citizenship, which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- 5) All staff will be familiar with North Lanarkshire Council's Child and Adult Protection Procedure and Guidance folder - located in the Head Teacher's office.

The Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (Designated Person) for Stane Primary School and Nursery Class is:

Mrs. Laura Simpson, Head Teacher

Email: LSimpsonL1@northlan.org.uk Tel: 01501 826705

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

The Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (refreshed in 2021) states that abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or be failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. This online document provides the following definitions of some of the ways in which children may experience abuse.

- **Physical abuse** – may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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 may also incorporate '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.

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 2021 (page 113). This can be accessed online at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/>

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).

Grounds for Concern – Action Guidance for all staff

The identification and protection of children at risk of abuse or those who have been abused should be treated as a priority and the Procedures and Guidelines will ensure a common clearly understood framework within which educational establishments 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 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.
- The child's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing, writing or statement(s) causes suspicion of abuse.

Employees have a responsibility to report suspicions of child abuse and have professional and contractual obligations to report such suspicions.

Failure to report concerns could lead to a child being placed at further risk of harm or not receiving the support they need.

5. Action Points for All Staff

- **Immediately** report any grounds for concern to the Head Teacher.
- If the HT is unavailable **contact the Depute Head Teacher**, if they are not available **contact Social Work immediately**.
- **Do not** wait to gather evidence.
- **Do not** keep information secret.
- **Do not** discuss the matter with others.
- Follow the guidance given by the Head Teacher or Principal Teacher.
- **You must** provide a handwritten record of the incident
- **You must** date and sign the record of the incident.
- Under **NO** circumstances discuss your concerns with parents/carers etc.

Grounds for Concern – Action Guidance for all staff.

6. Supporting the Child

When a child is disclosing abuse, a member of staff 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 or shock.
- Do not introduce personal or third-party experiences of abuse.
- Avoid displaying strong emotions.
- **As soon as possible**, record the conversation using the words of the child and any questions or comments made by yourself.

7. Action points for Head Teacher (or PEF DHT in the absence of the HT)

Head Teachers should follow the action points below.

- Act promptly.
- Treat the grounds of 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 social worker at the local area office and follow any instructions given.
- **Immediately report** a medical emergency to the medical services and administer first aid if required.
- If appropriate, contact the police.
- Alleged involvement of staff in child abuse should be reported to the Assistant Chief Executive of Education and Families, or the appropriate Head of Service.
- **Record (on the same day)** the grounds for concern and action taken using the NLC Notification of Concern Form (Appendix 2)
- Send the report and copies as detailed on the form.
- **Co-operate** fully with all statutory agencies that may become involved.
- **Support** the child or children involved as necessary and appropriate.

Pupil Progress Records

- Significant changes, events and decisions should be recorded and monitored.
- Ensure compliance with Standard Circular C5
- At transition stages all pupil records must be transferred to the receiving school.

8. Co-operating

Education staff should co-operate fully with enquiries, investigations and support plans as directed by the HT and Head of Service. Staff should provide reports, attend case discussions, case conferences and reviews as required.

9. What happens 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.
- Referral to another agency or service.
- Referral to an appropriate legal agency such as the Children's Reporter.
- Where Child Protection concerns are identified, a multi-agency meeting will be held to decide the best way to protect the child and support the family.

Roles and Responsibilities

In Stane Primary School and Nursery Class the Head of Establishment 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

The nursery recognises its legal duty to report any significant child protection concerns, incidents of suspected abuse or neglect, or any occurrence where a child has gone missing, to the Care Inspectorate without delay. This notification will be made promptly in line with the Care Inspectorate's reporting requirements, ensuring transparency, accountability and continuous safeguarding of all children in our care.

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 of establishment. 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 or Depute. Further support is available from Child Protection Development Officer, Lindsey Mitchell at the Civic Centre, Motherwell.

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 the Head Teacher office). Grounds for concern to be recorded as a significant event 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.

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

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with young people have a duty to report concerns.

Education staff have a responsibility to report suspicions of child abuse and have a professional and contractual obligation to report such suspicions.

All staff are required to follow with guidelines and procedures contained within NLC's **Child and Adult Protection and Guidance** folder, which is kept in the Head Teacher's room.

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff will be informed of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and the procedures for referring concerns to the Designated Person - Head Teacher. This will take the form of annual Child Protection Training in August or during staff induction meetings at other times of the year.

The designated person for child protection will receive regular training.

Staff will be supported through opportunities to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Person if required.

Class Teachers will ensure that any absence of a pupil on the Child Protection Register of two days without satisfactory explanation is referred to the Head Teacher, who will then share this information with other agencies if appropriate.

Ensure that a named teacher (Head Teacher) is designated for Looked After Children (LAC) and that an up to date list of children is regularly reviewed and updated.

Procedures

Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, we will follow the procedures set out in North Lanarkshire Council's **Child and Adult Protection and Guidance** folder, a copy of which is kept in the Head Teacher's office.

A flow chart of the procedure is contained in the school's electronic workspace and is kept by every member of the staff in their day book.

Parents may access the school's child protection procedures via the school handbook or website.

Written records of any concern regarding a child's safety will be kept in a file in a locked cabinet in the Head teacher's office.

The school recognises that it does not have the responsibility to investigate cases of suspected child abuse.

Staff will co-operate with relevant external agencies in any enquiries regarding child protection matters, including representation at case conferences, core groups and multi-agency planning meetings.

Parents will be advised of the intention to refer to Social Work and their views and co-operation sought, unless we have good reason to believe that to do so would place a child at greater risk of harm.

All staff will make it clear to any child disclosing information that they cannot guarantee confidentiality, but they will only pass the information on to the people that can help them.

Information concerning children at risk will be shared with all members of staff on a "need to know" basis. The Designated Person will make a judgement in each individual case about who needs and has a right to access particular information.

Where there are concerns about a child, a teacher may be asked to keep a log of observations on Click and Go Latest Pastoral Notes. The Head Teacher will also be informed of these Pastoral Notes.

All records are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Data Protection Act (1998). If there is any doubt as to the rights of any party to access information, the school may seek legal advice prior to releasing any information.

Allegations against staff

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, the Head teacher should be immediately informed.

The Head Teacher will discuss the allegation with the Lead Officers for Child Protection for the Local Authority.

If the allegation concerns the behaviour of the Head Teacher, the Head Service for Education and Families should be informed immediately.

In the absence of a member of the SMT, staff should know how to initiate a Child Protection referral. If support is required, staff should contact the Education Officer, Support for Learning on 01236 812291 or the duty officer on 01236 812210.

Further information can be accessed at <http://www.childprotectionsotland.org>

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is a legal term - and the Public Disclosure Act 1998 sets out a number of criteria for raising concerns to qualify as whistleblowing. Full details are on this website <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Whistleblowing is when a worker raises a concern about wrongdoing in the public interest. A worker can blow the whistle to someone in their own organisation or to a third party known as a 'prescribed person'. The GTCS and the Care Inspectorate are prescribed persons in the whistleblowing legislation.

If the concern meets the whistleblowing criteria, then the person who is blowing the whistle is legally protected from suffering any disadvantage or victimisation from their employer because of what they have done. In addition, any acts of victimisation against you by your colleagues should be treated as a disciplinary offence by your employer. Your employment and opportunities for future promotion or training should not be affected.

Most employers will have whistleblowing policies and procedures where you can find more information on how to blow the whistle.

APPENDIX

Related Policies:

Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy

Relevant Documents

NLC - Child and Adult Protection & Guidance (2024)

National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland (2021) Updated 2023

Policy due for review: Annually - August 2026