



**MUIRHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS CENTRE  
CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY  
(UNCRC Article 39) – AUGUST 2023**



### **Rationale**

“All children and young people (including unborn babies) have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and grown up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their safety is paramount.”

(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014’).

### **Responsibility**

Schools have a very important role to play in the sensitive issue of dealing with known and suspected cases of abuse or neglect. It is essential that all staff in schools must be aware of the arrangements for protecting children, are alert to children’s needs and are clear about their own role in ensuring the safety of all children. Staff should follow the policy and procedure which has been laid down in South Ayrshire, **(Management Guideline on Child Protection, Safeguarding and Wellbeing, January 2020)** including annual training, and follow national guidance contained within the policy document ‘National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014’, when a case of child abuse is suspected.

The GIRFEC programme outlines the wellbeing indicators for children; Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included, and will ensure that children and their carers are central to the process of finding solutions and having their needs met. Everyone working with children is expected to use one consistent approach, actively sharing information to agreed protocols and working more effectively together to improve outcomes for children. Everyone needs to be clear about their personal responsibility to do the right thing for each child. Parents and children, together with schools, professionals and others working with children will benefit from a collaborative approach which results in the development of one plan to meet all the child’s needs. This will help them deal more effectively with hazards such as abuse or harassment and to report them. School staff are well placed to observe physical and psychological changes in a child which might indicate abuse. They are likely to have the greatest level of day to day contact with children and they are able to contribute a great deal to the assessment of vulnerable children.

It is equally important that child protection and personal safety programmes are promoted within the curriculum, both formally and informally. Teachers are in an excellent position to develop values, knowledge and skills that children need to assert their rights in order to:

- raise their awareness of risks,
- develop skills which will help them to keep safe,
- help recognise the behaviours in others which may place them at risk,
- teach them how to respond in order to keep themselves safe.

### **What is Child Protection?**

Child protection means protecting a child or young person from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

**(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014’).**

### **Definition:**

“**Child abuse**” is defined in the *National Guidance for Child Protection*, which provides definitions of abuse against a non-exhaustive list of areas of concern:

- **Physical abuse;**
- **Sexual abuse;**
- **Neglect; and • Emotional abuse.**

### **Indicators or abuse/concern may include:**

<b>Changes in behaviour</b>	<b>Constantly attention seeking</b>	<b>Poor attendance / timekeeping</b>
<b>Parental drug/alcohol misuse</b>	<b>Repeated or unusual injuries</b>	<b>Persistently hungry unkempt, tired,</b>
<b>Poor concentration</b>	<b>Age inappropriate behaviour and / or language</b>	<b>Takes time to settle in morning</b>
<b>Withdrawn/social isolation/ aggression</b>	<b>Has to live with Domestic abuse</b>	<b>Anxiety at home time</b>

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

### **Possible signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Untreated injuries or delay in reporting them
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Withdrawal of physical contact
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others
- Running away (not specific to child abuse)

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

### **Possible signs of Emotional Abuse**

- Fear of new situations
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggressive
- Continual self-deprecation
- Over-reaction to mistakes

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Possible signs of Physical Neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Repeatedly worn and dirty clothes
- Untreated medical problems
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- Poor social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Returning to an empty home

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or nonpenetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **Possible signs of sexual abuse are:**

### **Physical**

- Regressed clingy behaviour
- Withdrawn attitude
- Increased anxiety
- Tearfulness
- Few or no friends of own age
- Inappropriate play with dolls and peer groups
- Unable to stay awake at school
- Fear of adults
- Poor concentration
- Angry/ aggressive behaviour towards peers and/or adults
- Sexualised behaviour
- Self-harming behaviour
- Depression
- Anxiety/panic attacks/phobias
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse

Not all children who are abused or neglected will display these signs and equally a child may display some of the signs and symptoms for other reasons.

### **How Concerns May Arise**

- A member of staff may raise a concern from knowledge of the child or from observing behaviour or appearance of the child or from what a child has said.
- A child discloses to a teacher or member of staff that abuse has taken place or that the child feels unsafe.
- A third party expresses concern to a member of staff; this could be a parent, guardian or other pupil.
- An anonymous allegation is received.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Head teacher must:**

- Ensure that child protection procedures are known to all new and visiting staff.
- Plan a child protection/safeguarding children awareness raising session for all staff who come in to contact with children in the course of the school day - awareness raising taking place at the beginning of each new academic session and to visiting staff on arrival if necessary.
- Distribute a copy of SAC Child Protection PowerPoint to any new member of staff who joins the school.
- Place a copy of the Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy in the staff shared area, under Policies and also display on the school website for parents to access.
- Include details of CP Co-ordinator and procedures on our visitor badges.
- Ensure that child protection procedures are followed within the school and that records are kept in a confidential file and contained within a locked drawer/cabinet.
- Include and promote child protection and child safety within the curriculum
- Foster, along with all staff members, an ethos of protection and care within the school
- Ensure that parents should be made aware of child protection procedures and general content of child safety and child protection within the curriculum
- Establish positive working relationships with other agencies.

At Heathfield Primary School and EYC, **Elaine Cooke and Lynsey Livingstone** are the **Child Protection Co-ordinators**. In their absence, **Gaenor Hardy** will be first point of contact. In the event that both Head Teacher and Depute Head Teachers are not available, any reports of should be directed to **Natalie Spence, Holly McBlane, Caryn Davidson or Allan Ward, Principal Teachers**.

### **Teachers and other staff**

- Must follow child protection procedures as laid down by South Ayrshire Council without delay.
- Should know how to respond to a disclosure or suspicion of abuse from yearly training.
- Should be clear that a guarantee of absolute confidentiality **cannot** be given to a pupil.
- Should be confident in delivering child safety and child protection as part of the school curriculum

### **Pupils**

- Should be encouraged to seek help from an adult they trust if they think they may be in an abusive situation or if one of their classmates is in an abusive situation.

### **What to do:**

Follow SAC guidelines as detailed below.

You should **OBSERVE**, **RECORD** AND **REPORT**

- R** Respond without showing any signs of anxiety or shock. Take time to listen without asking too many questions
- E** Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset
- C** Confidentiality should not be promised to children or adults
- O** Observe carefully the behaviour of the child or the demeanour of the person expressing concern
- R** Record in detail what you have seen or heard. Any sign of physical injury must be recorded in detail or sketched
- D** Do not interrogate, rather encourage the child to say what he or she wants to say until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate. Use open-ended questions. The child must be told that the CPD must be informed.

And then **REPORT** immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator

### **Actions by Child Protection Co-ordinator**

- Listen and respond to general concerns raised by staff, children, young people and parents or carers in relation to child protection;
- Collate all known relevant information about the child
- Co-ordinate action within the establishment in relation to specific children or young people, about whom concerns have been raised;
- Refer to named social worker (if child has social worker - **01292 267675** ) or duty social worker (if child is not known to social services – **01292 267675**) or no referral
- Decide who will inform parents
- Check that all relevant agencies are informed in referring
- Check all records are complete and kept in a confidential file

**CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN FORM CAN BE FOUND AT:**

[CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN FORM 2019.docx](#)