

## **Bathgate Academy Child Protection Procedure**

Getting It Right for Every Child ('GIRFEC') means that all those people who have a responsibility to help children and young people will make sure that they do their best to keep them safe and healthy and help them to achieve their potential. They will assist children and young people to get the support and advice that they may need and will involve them in decisions which affect them.

At the heart of the GIRFEC approach is an emphasis on early, proactive intervention in order to create a supportive environment and identify any additional support that may be required as early as possible.

"As children and young people, we have a right to be protected and be safe from harm from others" (Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter 2004 and the rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). The Charter includes 13 statements from children.

Children and young people can expect that those who have a responsibility to them will:

- Get to know them
- Speak with them
- Listen to them
- Take them seriously
- Involve them
- Respect their privacy
- Be responsible to them
- Think about their lives as a whole
- Think carefully about how information about them is used
- Put them in touch with the right people
- Use power to help
- Make things happen when they should
- Help them to be safe

The Charter also pledges that children and young people will:

- get the help they need when they need it
- be seen by a professional such as a teacher, doctor or social worker to make sure they are alright and not put at more risk;
- be listened to seriously, and professionals will use their power to help them;
- be able to discuss issues in private when, and if, they want to;
- be involved with, and helped to understand, decisions made about their lives;
- have a named person to help them.

Those helping children and young people will:

- share information to protect them;
- minimise disruption to other parts of their life;
- work together effectively on their behalf;
- be competent, confident, properly trained and supported;
- rigorously monitor services to continually improve how and what is done to help them.

Full copies of the Charter, the Edinburgh and Lothian Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures (2015) and the Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) can be accessed from the following link:-

<http://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/article/6976/Child-Protection>.

This policy adopts the guidance and procedures set out in the above documents and focuses on:

- General Principles
- Definition of Child Abuse and Child Neglect
- Signs and Symptoms
- Dealing with an Allegation
- Record Keeping
- Providing Training
- Learning & Teaching
- Internet Access
- Excursion (home and abroad)
- Involving Children and Young People
- Keeping Parents Informed

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### 1. The Welfare of the Child

The overarching principle of this policy is the protection and wellbeing of the child. **It is the responsibility of all school staff to help children and young people to be safe.** Staff must constantly demonstrate this through their planning and their actions.

### 2. Joint Working

Child protection is not the responsibility of any single agency. Professionals working with children and young people are required to work together to share information, assess needs and risks and plan and deliver services jointly in a co-ordinated manner. In so doing, the risk of harm to children and young people can be reduced and their welfare promoted.

Sharing information is essential to child protection. The Scottish Government and agency expectations are explicit:

'Where there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or agency requirement to keep information confidential.'

### 3. Equality and Diversity

Children and young people have a wide variety of needs and characteristics which may require special consideration. These include age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and social difference. The diverse needs of children and young people will be considered explicitly when making decisions regarding their care and protection.

This school is committed to ensuring that children and young people will be listened to and respected and will endeavor to respond appropriately with a focus on individual outcomes and enablement. There will be no discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, gender change, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment or on the basis of pregnancy and maternity status.

All communication with children and young people and/or their families or carers will be appropriate to their level of understanding. The Designated Member of Staff will ensure that decision making is explicit and clearly recorded when considering issues of diversity.

The Designated Members of Staff (DMS) in this school are:

**Grace Burns:** [grace.burns@westlothian.org.uk](mailto:grace.burns@westlothian.org.uk), 01506 653725

**Ellis McKay:** [ellis.mckay@westlothian.org.uk](mailto:ellis.mckay@westlothian.org.uk), 01506 653725

## **DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND CHILD NEGLECT**

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. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Following the introduction of the Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014), concerns identified are to be recorded, rather than categories of abuse. Concerns may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, parental drug and/or alcohol abuse, parental mental health problems, child exploitation, children putting themselves at risk, non-engaging families and other concerns, such as Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and Radicalisation.

While it is not necessary to identify specific areas of concern when adding a child's name to the Child Protection Register, it is helpful to consider and understand the different ways in which children can be abused. The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child or young person but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Whilst the law recognises some physical chastisement of children as reasonable any blow to the head, shaking or use of an implement is against the law.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child (known as fabricated or induced illness (FII)).

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the **persistent** emotional neglect or ill treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, and preventing the child participating in social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another (including being exposed to domestic abuse). It may involve serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child or young person, though it may also occur in isolation.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child or young person 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 or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non - penetrative acts. They may include non - contact activities such as involving a child or young person in looking at or in the production of indecent images, watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or young person or encouraging a child or young person to act in sexually inappropriate ways. It should be noted that it is not only adults who may abuse a child or young person. Peers can also be involved in this type of abuse. There may be situations in which a young person commits or is suspected of committing a serious violent or sexual offence, in which case, the West Lothian Young Person's Risk Management Procedure will apply. These procedures apply to all young people attending school, including those over 16 years of age.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to 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. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act. (Scottish Government Oct 2016). The West Lothian Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure provides detailed guidance about what constitutes CSE, outlines the procedure to be adopted in CSE inquiries and gives a list of indicators of risk and vulnerabilities associated with sexual exploitation. This list is designed to assist practitioners in

assessing the information they have and to facilitate the identification of CSE when information is being shared.

Unlawful Sexual Activity Inter-Agency Guidance for Edinburgh and the Lothians (2011) provides professionals with important guidance where children and young people are involved in sexual activity under the age of 16 years.

## **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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. 'Getting it Right for Children and Families Affected by Parental Problem Alcohol and Drug Use' (2013) provides a framework for protecting children affected by all types of problem substance use by parent(s)/carer(s).

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home and abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from 'non-organic failure to thrive'. This is failure to meet expected weight and growth norms or developmental milestones, with there being no basis in a hereditary or medical condition which would explain this. In its extreme form, children can be at extreme risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses, reduction in potential stature and with young children in particular, the results may be life threatening over a relatively short period.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

The following is a list of signs and symptoms which may be indicative of abuse. This is intended as a guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may, however, indicate that investigation should take place. It should also be noted that there may be no obvious signs and symptoms.

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed
- Incompatible explanations
- Constant minor injuries
- Unexplained bruising:
  - Bruise marks in or around the mouth
  - Black eyes, especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks to forehead or nose
  - Grasp marks

- Finger marks
- Bruising of the ears
- Linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)
- Differing age bruising
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Cigarette burns
- General physical disability
- Unresponsiveness in the child
- Soiling and wetting
- Change in behaviour patterns
- 'Frozen' look
- Attention seeking
- Apprehension
- Antisocial behaviour
- Unkempt appearance
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Sexualised drawings and play
- Sudden poor performance in school
- Poor self-esteem
- Self-mutilation
- Withdrawal
- Running away
- Reluctance to return home after school
- Resistance to PE (undressing)
- Resistance to school medical
- Difficulty in forming relationships
- Confusing affectionate displays
- Poor attendance – repeated infections etc

## **DEALING WITH AN ALLEGATION**

### **Allegation of Abuse**

Both the Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) and the Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures (2015) make it very clear that concerns should be shared without delay and that action must be taken as soon as possible and in any event, on the same day as the abuse is alleged.

If a child or young person discloses information to a staff member, then that member of staff must:

- not promise confidentiality; he or she should tell the pupil that the information will be passed on, if the staff member feels that the child or young person is at risk
- act immediately, following school procedures to alert the DMS. Cover will be provided if the staff member is required to talk further to the child or young person.

- reassure, listen carefully and take the allegation seriously.
- establish the basic facts, asking only:

**What happened?**

**Where did it happen?**

**Who did it?**

**When did it happen?**

Do not extend the interview at this stage. Do not ask leading questions. Be sympathetic and understanding but do not offer any personal experiences. This could affect the evidence.

The staff member must **handwrite** (not type) a detailed account of what was said, using as far as possible the language the child used. This must be done as soon as possible (and in all cases, on the same working day) after the dialogue with the child or young person has been completed. This must be dated and signed and time recorded before being given to the DMS.

The staff member may be asked to speak to the child or young person again if it is felt that this is required and would be in the best interests of the child or young person.

**If, at any time during this process, the child or young person either wishes to withdraw the allegation or stop talking about it, the member of staff must respect this decision, write up what happened, date, time and sign and pass this information to the DMS.**

It is the DMS's responsibility to contact one of the Core Agencies (see Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Procedures for Child Protection (2015)).

**The DMS will also advise the West Lothian Child Protection Officer when one of the Core Agencies has been contacted following an allegation.**

All child protection referrals should be logged in both the school child protection log and individual child protection chronologies. Allegation report forms should be completed and all notes and records of actions taken and outcomes must be recorded. Copies of child protection case conference reports, reports from the Children's Hearing System and other relevant documents should be held in the pupil's individual child protection file, which will be stored in a locked cabinet.

Allegations out of school e.g. on day excursions, should be treated in the same way i.e. the DMS should be informed immediately.

**In circumstances when the DMS cannot be contacted, then it is the duty of the member of staff to whom the child has disclosed, to follow the procedures and contact one of the core agencies without delay** e.g. Social Care Emergency Team (SCET) if the allegation is made out of hours.

Where an allegation is made against staff, the Head Teacher should be informed immediately and the procedures outlined in section 15 of the Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures 2015 followed.

## **Suspicion of abuse**

If a member of staff has reason to suspect abuse then, he or she must:

- Contact the DMS immediately and make them aware of the suspicion of abuse;
- Make notes of their concerns as soon as possible and at least on the same working day;
- Sign and date the notes on the same working day and record the time at which the DMS was advised of the concerns;
- Pass the notes to the DMS for storage in the child protection file of the pupil involved.

**Any** concerns, however trivial they seem at the time, must be reported immediately to the DMS.

## **Making the decision about where a child goes after school.**

Children may make disclosures or exhibit signals that cause concern as the time approaches for them to leave the safety of the school environment. It is important that these circumstances are not compounded by lack of action.

- Referrals must be made without delay to enable information gathering and discussion to take place at an early stage and before time scales become critical, e.g. before the end of the school day.
- The DMS must check all information about the child held in school to ensure knowledge of child's status e.g. legal documents or signed correspondence relating to residency, custody and parental rights
- Where the child's departure from school is imminent and he or she is likely to be exposed to further risk, the DMS will immediately contact the Duty Social Work Manager for Child Protection for advice on the most appropriate place for the child to go after school. If Social work are unavailable the DMS must contact either Police (Public Protection Unit) or the Paediatrician On Call for Child Protection.

This is to ensure that the most suitable adult is available to receive the child.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

A confidential log should be kept in a locked cabinet by the DMS of all reported incidents. All Child Protection referrals should be logged and detail forms completed. All notes, record of actions taken and outcomes must be recorded. This information should be kept in the pupil's locked child protection file. Copies of Child Protection Case Conference reports, Panel reports and relevant documents should be held in the pupil's child protection file. A chronology should also be kept in the pupil's child protection file.

- All recorded incidents should be reported to Civic Centre. These will be recorded on an authority database (Child Protection Officer).



- DMS will ensure a red dot (or something similar) is placed on a pupil's record card (PPR) to indicate that there is a Child Protection issue about this pupil or a member of their family. (Details will not be given of the issue unless it is necessary for the safety and well-being of the student concerned).
- Whilst no details of child protection incidents will be recorded on Seemis pastoral notes due to their confidential nature, it is important that the Seemis chronology acknowledges that there has been a significant event. In these situations, an entry stating 'See DMS' should be inserted in the pastoral notes. The DMS can then determine what information is appropriate to be shared with relevant staff.

## **PROVIDING TRAINING**

DMS will attend annual training for DMS planned and delivered by the West Lothian Child Protection Officer.

In addition, this school will ensure that all members of staff both teaching and non-teaching will participate in annual training provided by the Head Teacher or Designated Member of Staff (DMS). In addition, new members of staff will have the opportunity to attend West Lothian Council's multi-agency training on child protection. Members of staff should attend Authority DMS training prior to taking on the role of DMS if possible or as soon as possible after appointment to the role. In addition, it is recommended that DMS also attend multi-agency training on risk assessment, child sexual exploitation and working with non-engaging families. Existing DMS should attend the annual training provided each session.

A session on basic child protection and handling an allegation will be delivered to probationer teachers on their first day in school prior to commencing work with children and young people. Further training on child protection in practice will then be delivered as part of their career long professional learning programme.

All new staff will be given information on Child Protection procedures in school as part of their induction. This will include a personal aide memoire card and identification of the DMS(s) within the school.

All parent helpers engaged in activities in school will be given information on Child Protection procedures as part of their induction and thereafter on an annual basis. This will include a personal aide memoire card and identification of the DMS(s) within the school.

## **LEARNING & TEACHING**

The following are used to support implementation of this Child Protection policy:

- Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Programmes, for example, SHARE, CSE awareness
- Internet Safety, for example, ThinkUKnow
- Personal Safety, for example, domestic abuse.
- Curriculum for Excellence (Health & Well Being)
- How Good is Our School 4

## **DIGITAL LEARNING**

Digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery. West Lothian Council recognises and welcomes the use of all digital tools, both personal and school owned. This school has developed a Charter for the use of these digital tools which is child led and child centred. We recognise that parents/carers, staff and the wider school community have a key role in contributing to this Charter and in ensuring it is relevant and meaningful to each child.

West Lothian Council acknowledges that in addition to the significant benefits to learning in using digital technology, there are also risks inherent in the online world. The Curriculum for Excellence provides experiences for learners to develop an evolving understanding of these opportunities and risks and how to keep themselves and others safe in the process. This school will work with parents and carers to develop their understanding of how they can support their child's online activity and signpost appropriate resources.

West Lothian Education Services implements software to provide protection from inappropriate material on the internet without impeding the acquisition of information and monitors the activity of all users on the West Lothian network.

West Lothian Council has internet rules for all users to help them protect themselves and keep themselves and others safe. This school implements a Responsible Internet User Agreement which is available for every user to read and agree to when they log onto a school computer.

Further information on safe use of the internet is available at:

<https://childline.org.uk/>

<http://www.besafeonline.org>

<http://www.thinkuknow.org.uk>

## **EXCURSION (HOME AND ABROAD)**

Excursions out of school enhance the educational experience of pupils. In planning and preparing for excursions, this school will follow the West Lothian Council School Excursion Policy. The School Excursion Policy is designed to ensure that risks arising from excursions are minimized so that the safety and wellbeing of pupils is protected. As part of this process, the Excursion Leader will complete the Mandatory School Excursion Planning Checklist which is contained within the policy and ensure that a record of this is signed and dated and stored as evidence for a period of three months following the excursion or the last of a series of repeat excursions.

The Head Teacher or DMS will review the completed checklist and ensure that appropriate risk assessments have been completed and proportionate safety measures have been put in place. He or she will also ensure that effective child protection procedures have been put in place.

## **INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children and young people will through education and age appropriate resources be helped to understand about child protection procedures, how they will be involved and how they can contribute to decisions about their future. Careful consideration will be given to the needs of the child or young person and the use of advocacy services for the child or young person will be considered, where appropriate.

## **KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED**

Parents and carers are informed of the school's responsibilities regarding child protection through the school website, Parent Council, parent's evenings such as transition meetings (P7 Roadshow) and the School Handbook.

It is our role as educators to ensure all our students live safely and can reach their full potential. As such, all staff in Bathgate Academy will follow the Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures which were introduced on 01.06.07 and refreshed in 2012 and 2015.