**Child Protection in John Logie Baird Primary School**

**Updated October 2024**

*‘The curriculum needs to be delivered in a school with an ethos which empowers children; a school which allows them to voice ideas, feelings and opinions, treats them with respect, values their contribution and lets parents make a contribution to the educational process.’*

From **‘Responding to Child Abuse’**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

It is recognised that staff play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child abuse co-operate together to the benefit of the child. All schools have a designated Child Protection co-ordinator who liaises with external agencies and with staff in school. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every member of staff within school to recognise or report concerns.

At John Logie Baird primary school the Headteacher is the designated person for child protection. All staff have total commitment to child protection. They raise children’s awareness about themselves through personal and social development, through the curriculum namely health and wellbeing education, and develop a trusting climate so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

John Logie Baird primary school has a policy of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This means that parents are not informed or consulted in some instances. This is clearly laid out in Argyll and Bute council, education department’s standard circular on child protection. All staff are trained in Child Protection by means of Argyll and Bute’s Child Protection Presentation, usually at the start of each term but for some through the year. We adopt the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) practice and apply the wellbeing indicators of Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI) to benefit all.

We may not be able to prevent child abuse, but by following child protection procedures, we are trying our best to protect all our children and this is our priority.

All teachers attempt, through their care of children, to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and are able to avoid inappropriate behaviours. Suspected cases are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies. We also care for children who have been abused and understand their problems.

**AIMS**

By following child protection procedures we:

* Care for the child
* Care for our school
* Care for the community we serve
* Respond to the guidelines and procedures of other agencies

**Child protection involves:**

* immediate action, if necessary, to prevent significant harm to a child
* inter-agency investigation about the occurrence or probability of abuse or neglect, or of a criminal offence against a child. Investigation extends to other children affected by the same apparent risks as the child who is the subject of a referral
* assessment and action to address the interaction of behaviour, relationships and conditions that may, in combination, cause or accelerate risks
* focus within assessment, planning and action upon each child’s experience, needs and feelings
* collaboration between agencies and persistent efforts to work in partnership with parents in planning and action to prevent harm or reduce risk of harm
* recognition and support for the strengths, relationships and skills within the child and their world in order to form a plan that reduces risk and builds resilience

**GUIDELINES**

In reporting concern or suspicion, all adults in school must adhere to the following procedures. The head teacher will then follow the Argyll and Bute child protection procedures.

**REASONS FOR FOLLOWING PROCEDURES**

* It protects the child to the best of our ability
* It avoids delay
* It provides consistency
* It ensures that, if further action is taken by another agency, then the school has followed the protection procedures

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse.

**If a child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, follow steps below:**

**Step 1** Immediately report the grounds for concern to the Head of the establishment or to the Child Protection Coordinator for the service. If you have direct evidence or suspicion of child abuse then the only way you can protect the child or children is to report the matter immediately. You must ensure that your ongoing involvement is in each child’s best interests: you must not wait to gather evidence, nor agree to keep the information secret, nor discuss the matter with others.

**Step 2** Follow the guidance given by the head or child protection co-ordinator in relation to recording your concerns, supporting the child and co-operating with subsequent actions to investigate the grounds of concern and to protect the child or children concerned.

It is very important in such cases that prompt and advised protocols are followed under Argyll and Bute child protection procedures.

The reporting teacher will be told of any further action taken ie social work referral, continued monitoring etc. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency, then any meetings, case conferences or action taken will be followed through and the teacher concerned will be informed.

Staff have an important role in listening carefully to what children have to say. The school can provide a secure place where the child feels it is safe to talk. Sensitivity to the disclosure is vital. Staff must listen carefully to what the child is saying, treat it seriously, and value what they say.

Children may feel they will not be believed, or that they will be punished. Staff will need to reassure youngsters that whatever has happened is not their fault. Fear of the consequences of telling is very common. It can be very tempting to offer a promise of confidentiality to the child. This is not realistic. The child needs to hear the truth about what will happen, together with a commitment to support the child. It is crucial not to ask leading questions. Our role is to empower the child to speak and then know what to do next.

Records of children causing concern are kept in the secure filing cabinet in the office. This includes all children, who, for whatever reason, need to be monitored. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is on this register. Teachers must inform the head teacher of any changes/additions so that this list can be kept up to date.

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

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.

* 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 behavioural 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 medicals
    - Difficulty in forming relationships
    - Confusing affectionate displays
    - Poor attendance – repeated infections etc

**DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

JLB adopts the definitions contained within the August 2021 Child Protection Training Presentation. An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 17 who has suffered from physical injury, physical neglect, failure to thrive, and emotional or sexual abuse. The abuser is the person who has had custody; charge or care of the child and either caused or knowingly failed to prevent the abuse. Having custody, charge or care includes any person, in whatever setting, who, at the time, is responsible for that child.

**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.

There may be some variation in family, community or cultural attitudes to parenting, for example in relation to reasonable discipline. Cultural sensitivity must not deflect practitioners from a focus on a child’s essential needs for care and protection from harm, or a focus on the need of a family for support to reduce stress and associated risk

**SEXUAL ABUSE**

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age 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.

For those who may be victims of sexual offences aged 16-17, child protection procedures should be considered. These procedures must be applied when there is concern about the sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology. Children who are trafficked across borders or within the UK may be at particular risk of sexual abuse.

**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. ‘Persistent’ means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused, or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers), or to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect may include unresponsiveness to a child’s essential emotional needs. ‘Non-organic failure to thrive’ refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition may be associated with chronic neglect.

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. ‘Persistent’ means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse is present to some extent in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse. It may involve: conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person

exploitation or corruption of a child, or imposition of demands inappropriate for their age or stage of development

repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation

demands that so exceed a child’s capability that they may be harmful

extreme overprotection, such that a child is harmed by prevention of learning, exploration and social development

seeing or hearing the abuse of another (in accordance with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018)

**CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION**

Criminal exploitation refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. Violence or the threat of violence may feature. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur through the use of technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

**CHILD TRAFFICKING**

Child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation. Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders. Examples of trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

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**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

**FORCED MARRIAGE**

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so called ‘honour-based’ abuse (HBA). HBA includes practices used to control behaviour within families, communities, or other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or ‘honour’.

**ARGYLL AND BUTE CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

These procedures are to be followed in reported abuse cases or suspicion of abuse. Copies of the procedure are in the school office.

The police investigate sexual abuse cases and social workers may be present to assist them when interviewing a child.

Please follow this link to take you to the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Procedures:

[I work with children, young people, parents and carers | Argyll and Bute Council (argyll-bute.gov.uk)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/children-and-young-people/i-work-children-young-people-parents-and-carers)

**This policy upholds the following articles of the UNCRC:**

* The right to ‘protection against discrimination’ (Article 2)
* The right to protection against all forms of violence – including physical or mental violence (Article 19)
* The right to be kept safe from harm and (Article 19)
* The right ‘to be given proper care by those looking after them’ (Article 19)
* The right ‘to contribute meaningfully to the decisions and circumstances that affect their lives’(Article 19)
* Thee right ‘to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously’ (Article 12)
* The right to an education that prepares them for responsible life in a free society. (Article 29)

**Other Useful Links:**

* [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/)