**John Logie Baird ELCC**

**Child Protection Policy**

It is recognised that teachers play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child abuse cooperate together to the benefit of the child. All schools have a designated teacher for child protection.

**Designated Person for Child Protection at JLB – Carolyn Randall (Head Teacher)**

All staff have a total commitment to child protection. They raise children’s awareness about themselves through personal and social development, health education and develop a trusting relationship so that the children are able to speak freely of their thoughts and feelings. JLB ELCC has a policy of partnership between home and school, however with a suspected child abuse case our first and only responsibility is the safety of the child.

Parents will not be informed or consulted in certain circumstances. This is laid out in the Argyll and Bute Council Education’s Department on Child Protection.

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

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

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 in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur. Concerns of actual and future risks will result in a child protection investigation and addressed in a child protection plan. It is helpful to understand the different ways in which children can be abused some of the indicators of risk are:

• Domestic Abuse

• Parental Alcohol and drug misuse

• Parental Mental Health Problems

• Non-engaging Families

• Sexual, physical or emotional abuse and neglect

• Child exploitation.

• Children placing themselves at risk

A clear and consistent understanding of the different concepts and terminology in child protection is essential if action to support and protect children is to be informed and effective there also has to be a clear definition of a child. A child can be defined in different legal contexts. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 defines a child in relation to the powers and duties of the local authority. Young people between the ages of 16-18 who are subject to a compulsory supervision order by a Children’s Hearing can be viewed as a child. An individual who meets the criteria for being considered an adult at risk is defined as such from the age of 16 upwards. Young people between 16 and 18 are therefore potentially vulnerable to “falling between the gaps” and Children and Families and Adult Care staff should liaise to ensure that the most appropriate on-going support and protection is provided according to the needs of the individual. In general:

• If the young person is at school, support and protection should be provided through Children and Families services

• If the young person has a current named worker then it should be that staff member who leads on offering support and protection in order to ensure continuity

• If the young person is over 16, not at school and not known to services, Adult care should undertake any necessary work to consider the risks to them and offer support

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

1. It protects the child to the best of our ability
2. Avoids delay
3. Provides consistency
4. Protects staff
5. Ensures that if any other further action is taken by another agency then the school has followed protection procedures.

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. The criterion should be that staff have ‘reasonable suspicion’ and, under the children’s act 1989, this definition has been extended to include ‘or may suffer in the future’.

If a child discloses abuse or staff have suspicions, there are three things to do:

1. Report immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer
2. Do not contact the parents or family
3. Do not promise a child that you will keep it a secret

The designation child protection officer will be told of any further action, for example social work referral, continued monitoring. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency then any meetings, case conferences or action will be followed through.

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

Children may feel that they may not be believed, or that they will be punished. Staff will reassure the children that whatever has happened is not their fault. Never promise a child that you will keep what they tell you a secret. They need to hear the truth about what will happen, together with commitment to support the child. Do not ask questions. It is our role to allow the child to speak freely.

Records of children causing concern are logged on their Pastoral Notes on SEEMIS. This is a secure system. Staff will be kept informed of those who are of concern.

**Signs and Symptoms**

Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof of child abuse. It may indicate that an investigation should take place. Factors of potential child abuse:

1. Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed.
2. Incompatible explanations
3. Constant minor injuries
4. Unexplained bruising
5. Grasp marks
6. Finger marks
7. Bruising of the ear, mouth, eyes
8. Bite marks
9. Burns and scalds
10. General physical disability
11. Unresponsiveness to the child
12. Soiling and wetting
13. Change in behavioural patterns
14. Attention seeking
15. Apprehension
16. Anti social Behaviour
17. Unkempt appearance

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