

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect, therefore child protection is the responsibility of everyone. 'It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright' (Scottish Executive, Nov 2002) underlines the need for us all to take responsibility in order to protect children

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. (Article 19: UNICEF Children's Rights and Responsibilities)

DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

In the context of these guidelines, the term "Child Abuse" incorporates suspected as well as actual abuse of children. Provided there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, each instance of actual or suspected Child Abuse must be reacted to and followed up as indicated in these guidelines.

The Inter Agency Child Protection Guidelines for Aberdeenshire - NESPC Child Protection Guidelines identify five categories of child abuse which must be recorded and acted upon:

- ◆ Physical Injury
- ◆ Non-Organic Failure To Thrive
- ◆ Emotional Abuse/Emotional Neglect
- ◆ Sexual Abuse
- ◆ Physical Neglect

Any member of staff who has abuse reported to them should, without delay, contact the Head Teacher **Margaret Thomson** or **Acting Depute** Theresa Allan, who is the designated member of staff dealing with all such instances.

If the Head Teacher or The Child Protection co-ordinator are not immediately available any other member of the Senior Management team should be immediately alerted.

Where the Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then he will contact the Divisional Social Work Department in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines.

Full copies of these guidelines are located in the HT/DHT's office

POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

Please note that the following are not exhaustive of the different reasons that you may be concerned about a child or young person but can serve some useful illustrations.

It is important to recognise that it is not the duty of any practitioner to diagnose the cause or impact of an injury on a child - serious injuries or those we are concerned about should always be reported to the child protection authorities for medical examination

Physical Indicators

- Injuries on areas of the body not associated with normal experiences of the child
- Marks which suggest the use of an implement
- Finger/hand marks
- Bite marks
- Scalds and Burns including cigarette burns
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Poor personal hygiene
- Recurrent medical conditions e.g. head-lice
- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness

Emotional/Behavioural Indicators

- Sexualised behaviour outwith expected norms for age/ stage
- Changes in behaviour - extremes of aggression or passivity
- Frozen watchfulness
- Compulsive stealing
- Hoarding of food
- Withdrawal from social contact or physical contact
- Chronic running away/truanting

Other Indicators

- Improbable explanations for injuries
- Changing explanations for injuries
- Disclosure from the child
- Drug/Alcohol/Substance use including administration to child by carer
- Family avoidance of professional contacts
- Failure to attend medical appointments
- Unreasonable delay in seeking medical advice
- Expectations on child that exceed normal age/ stage expectations

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

The following guidelines for dealing with disclosures have been devised to assist any member of staff who may have to respond to such a situation being brought to their attention.

Dealing with Disclosures

RECEIVE

Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said. Do be prepared to respond calmly. Children are more likely to allow you to help them if you are prepared to listen and appear not to panic.

RECORD

Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible. Sign your notes. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by court. Record date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the child, verbatim if possible. Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising.

REASSURE

Reassure the pupil but only so far as is honest and reliable. For example, do not make any promises that you may not be able to keep such as "Everything is going to be alright." Do not promise a child that you will not tell anyone else. You have a duty to refer. Instead explain that to help them stop the abuse you will need to talk to other people. Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it.

REACT

React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't interrogate for full details. Do not ask leading questions, for example "What did he/she do next?" (This assumes that he/she did). Such questions invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court. Do ask open questions like "Anything else to tell me? And? Yes?" Do not criticise the perpetrator as the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible. Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.

REPORT/REFER

Contact without delay the designated members of staff in school.

Head Teacher: Margaret Thompson

Depute Head Teacher & School Child Protection Co-ordinator: Theresa Allan

Depute Head Teachers: Theresa Allan

ANNUAL ACTIONS

Each year Banff Primary School will publish information through the parent handbook making parents aware of the school's *Child Protection Guidelines*. In particular this will make parents aware that in situations where there is a possibility that a child could be at risk of abuse or neglect, the school is required to refer the child to Social Work, the Police or the Reporter and that under these circumstances, the parents would not normally be consulted first. In addition staff will be informed and updated on an annual basis on the School's *Child Protection Guidelines*.