

## **Child Protection Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Settings**

We are committed to creating in ..... an environment in which children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is responded to promptly and appropriately. The well-being of children in our care takes precedence over any other consideration. It is the clear responsibility of all those involved in the setting to adopt good practice throughout their work.

In order to achieve this, we will:

- Seek to work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies and Highland Council to promote good practice in the area of child protection
- Update any changes in child protection policy and practice under guidance from the designated person in the school. This will be the head teacher of the school
- Endeavour to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate child protection training, supervision and support in order to implement this policy effectively and with the minimum of stress
- Plan and organise the centre so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur

**Within the school setting there will be a designated Child Protection Co-ordinator and depute, to whom staff must report.**

Should neither be available, setting staff must report directly to Practice Lead (Child Protection, Social Work) or the local Child Protection Advisor.

This procedure will be reviewed annually with the setting's Child Protection Policy.

For the most recent version, please refer to <http://hcpc.scot/>

The setting has adopted the following safe, caring practices for each play activity to minimise situations where abuse of children could occur:

- Parents will be fully informed of the activities their child will participate in, including staffing arrangements
- If, when alone with a member of staff, a child is accidentally hurt, or appears to be distressed in any manner, or appears to be sexually aroused by the adult's actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets anything the adult has done, the adult must report any such incident to senior staff/head teacher and follow the correct procedure as indicated in the whole school policy. The child's parents should be informed of the incident at the next opportunity
- Children will be encouraged to use appropriate language
- Staff will not use inappropriate language or make suggestive comments to children or other members of staff, even in fun
- Staff will be made aware of their role, area of responsibility, and person to whom they are accountable within the setting as part of their training
- Staff must respect children's privacy and dignity particularly when providing intimate care, e.g. toilet assistance and changing. Such assistance should only be given with the full consent and understanding of the parents
- Staff should not allow or engage in any inappropriate touching of any kind
- The role of the setting staff is to inform the senior staff/head teacher of any instance, which suggests that abuse is taking place. It is not the role of the setting to wait for proof, investigate or gather evidence of abuse
- When a child tells an adult about possible abuse, his or her statements should not be dismissed or ignored. The adult should attend carefully to what the child wants to communicate, taking account of the child's age and stage of development, and allow the child to say what he or she wants to say without being drawn into detailed questioning

Children with additional needs are particularly vulnerable and staff often have to provide assistance with personal care, which may include the physical handling of a child.

- Where a child is fully dependant on a member of staff to provide such assistance there is a need to be responsive to the child's wishes, and to give the child choices where possible
- Children should not be assisted to do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- The setting recognises that, in common with all organisations providing activities for children, there is the possibility that allegations of abuse could be made against members of staff. Please refer to Highland Council Intimate Care Policy

**All such allegations will be investigated as outlined in the Inter-agency Guidelines to Protect Children and Young Children in Highland.**

The centre will always seek to work with families in a clear, positive and open way, bearing in mind always that the welfare of the children is of paramount concern.

Child abuse is a criminal offence. All staff working at the setting have an ethical duty to report any reasonable concern that a child may be being abused.

Please refer to accompanying Highland Council Inter-Agency Guidelines which can be found at <http://hcpc.scot/>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

# Child Protection

## Procedure checklist for Centre Staff:

If

- A child discloses abuse, or
- A member of staff suspects a child may have been abused, or
- A third party expresses concern
- A staff member witnesses an abusive situation involving another staff member

The member of staff must: - RECORD and REPORT

- R Respond without showing any signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock
- E Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset
- C Confidentiality must not be promised to children or adults in this situation
- O Observe carefully the demeanour or behaviour of the child
- R Record in detail what has been seen and heard
- D Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations: rather encourage the child to say what he/she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

Then REPORT to senior staff/head teacher without delay

Members of staff **must not**

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse themselves
- Evaluate the grounds for concern
- Seek or wait for proof
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than senior staff/head teacher

## CASES COMING TO THE NOTICE OF SCHOOLS (CENTRE, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY) AND TO OTHER SECTIONS OF THE EDUCATION SERVICE

### School

This section deals with members of school staff. For the purpose of child protection, any member of the Education Service (e.g. advisor, educational psychologist, tutor) is also to be regarded as a member of school staff when he/she is present in a school.

In the primary school the designated person with responsibility for child protection is the Head Teacher. In secondary school the designated person is the Head Teacher or the member of the senior management team who has responsibility for support for pupils.

Members of school staff who are concerned that a child or young person has been, is being, or might be the subject of abuse of any form must immediately inform the designated person. The designated person should state what action he/she proposes.

If following discussion any concerns remain, the designated person must **immediately** contact Practice Lead (Care & Protection) followed by the referral using the standard Child Concern Form (see "Resources" [www.hcpc.scot](http://www.hcpc.scot)) to the Team Manager at the local Social Work office or the local Police.

If the member of school staff reporting is dissatisfied with the designated persons proposed action he/she should contact the Area Education Office for further advice.

If for any reason, it is not possible to make immediate contact with the local Area Education Manager, the Head Teacher must contact the nominated members of the Directorate at Council Headquarters, Inverness.

Where a referral is made, the designated person must contact Social Work Services and complete a Child Concern Form which will be submitted to the Senior Social Worker/Police and the Area Education/Assistant Area Education Manager. A copy should also be retained by the school and filed in secure storage managed by the Named Person.

It should be noted that the content of reports proposed for Child Protection Plan Meetings will be made known to the families concerned and that parents/carers may be present at the initial case conference and subsequent review meetings.

### Outwith School

For employees of the Education Service operating outwith school, the procedures outlined in the above paragraphs apply. The Named Person/ or appropriate line manager should be informed initially, e.g.:

- |   |   |                                    |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> educational psychologist and specialist SEN peripatetic teachers                   | ↗ | Senior Education Psychologist      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> community education worker   | ↗ | Area Community Education Officer   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> out-of-school tutor  | ↗ | Area Education Manager             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hostel warden  | ↗ | Area Education Manager             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> teachers working in an establishment run by a Council Service other than education | ↗ | Line Manager/Head of Establishment |

### Other Concerns

Situations can arise where it is suspected that a young person has been the subject of abuse on the part of an employee in the Council's service or other persons associated with school or club activities. No matter how sensitive the exposing of such circumstances may seem, it is the duty of all to report any suspicions or concerns by means of the above procedures.

### **The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Person for Education**

- ◆ Ensuring that all staff are familiar with the Inter-Agency guidelines and any organisational procedures relating to child protection, and that these guidelines are readily accessible to all

- ◆ Ensuring that any child protection referral passed to them is dealt with in accordance with the Inter-Agency guidelines and they offer all staff support and supervision throughout the process
- ◆ Ensuring that all staff are aware of the role of the designated person and that all staff know how to make contact with their designated person, or another, as necessary
- ◆ Ensuring that all relevant staff are informed of all case conferences and that the relevant staff attend all initial case conferences and review case conferences as appropriate
- ◆ Ensuring that all relevant information is made available to the case conference
- ◆ Providing support to staff attending the case conference if required
- ◆ Liaising with other agencies as necessary
- ◆ Identifying training and development needs for themselves and those staff involved in child protection issues and facilitate the provision of training opportunities

When a child protection concern is identified the member of staff working with the child will immediately discuss any concerns with the designated person. In the event of the designated person not being available contact should be made with another member of the Senior Management Team.

<p><b>In our centre the designated person is:</b> .....</p> <p><b>In their absence the second designated person is:</b>.....</p> <p><b>In their absence contact:</b></p> <p>.....Practice Lead (Care &amp; Protection) or</p> <p><b>Yvonne Ross ,Child Protection Officer, yvonne.ross@highland.gov.uk , 07917596598</b></p>
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The discussion will enable one of the following decisions to be taken –

Immediate referral to Senior Social Worker or Police

Further discussion with other members of staff e.g. school nurse, learning support auxiliary

Concern noted in appropriate records, with close monitoring for a specified period

The Designated person can have informal discussions with social work colleagues about the circumstances of children they are concerned about. However, if social work believe there are grounds for concern and further action they will act accordingly

## **CASES COMING TO THE NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT OR PRIVATE SCHOOL STAFF**

Where any member of staff has cause to believe that a child has been abused or is being abused or is likely to be abused by any source including abuse by other children, the concerns should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher or Manager.

The Head Teacher shall inform the Senior Social Worker or Police without delay and where the child(ren) involved already have a Social Worker, he/she should be informed immediately.

All investigations of allegations or suspicions of child abuse shall be carried out in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines.