



Mintlaw Academy

Child Protection Policy

September 2010

1. Introduction

All members of staff working in the school have a part to play in ensuring that the Child Protection Policy operates effectively. It is therefore essential that everyone in the school is aware of this policy and their role within it.

Members of staff in schools are well placed to observe physical, psychological or emotional changes in children that may indicate some form of child abuse. Also because of the close and trusting relationship that frequently exists between teachers and pupils it may be that a child who is experiencing some form of abuse will disclose information in some way to a teacher.

It is vital that all staff know what action to take should they have any concerns about a pupil or should they receive information which indicates that the child may be experiencing some form of abuse. The procedures outlined in this policy are designed both to safeguard the welfare of the child and to ensure that all school staff know how to respond if they are concerned or become aware that a child may have been abused.

The school also has an important role to play in preventing child abuse. We take positive steps to help children understand how to protect themselves through the PSE programme.

Aberdeenshire Council have adopted the NESCP (North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee) Child Protection Guidelines. Therefore, the school policy is based on these guidelines and on advice provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Policy in the area of Child Protection is underpinned by the Scottish Executive through The Children's Charter and the framework document *Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards (2004)* which includes 8 standards (see appendices)

The school policy aims to provide clear and unambiguous guidance for staff. Should any aspect of the policy or the guidance within it be unclear to you then please contact the Designated Person for Child Protection or any member of SMT or the Guidance Team.

The policy and associated procedures will be reviewed each year. Staff will receive a regular annual briefing on the policy, its operation and any amendments to it. All staff will be issued with a Child Protection Card. Staff and students joining the school during the session will be issued with the policy and card (see appendix 2) as part of their induction and line managers should ensure this is the case.

2. What is Child Abuse?

The NESCP guidelines identify five categories of Child Abuse that must be recorded and acted upon. These are –

- Physical Injury
- Non-organic failure to thrive
- Emotional abuse/ emotional neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Physical neglect

Fuller details of each of these categories can be found in the NESCP Child Protection Guidelines, Chapter 1. Reference copies of the NESCP guidelines are available for consultation in the Guidance Offices or from the designated person. They can also be accessed <http://www.nescp.org.uk/nescp/guidelines.html>.

It is also important to be aware that Child Abuse is not restricted to cases where an adult abuses a child. Child abuse may include instances where children or young people perpetrate abuse on other children. This abuse can be defined as activities between children of a physical or sexual nature where one or more of the following

characteristics is present: lack of true consent; inequalities in power; (e.g. chronological age, developmental stage or size); actual or threatened coercion; use of drugs or alcohol.

3. Procedure for the management of Child Protection in the school

a) Designated Person

Each school is required to have a designated person responsible for the co-ordination and management of all matters relating to Child Protection. The designated person for Mintlaw Academy is Helen Bryce, Depute Head Teacher. In handling cases of suspected child abuse Helen works closely with the relevant Principal Teacher(s) of Guidance, the Social Work Department and other external agencies as necessary.

Any member of staff who is concerned that about a possible allegation of child abuse should speak either to Helen or to the Principal Teacher of Guidance with responsibility for the pupil.

For information the Guidance Group responsibilities of the Principal Teachers of Guidance are

Brucklay	Andrew Kilpatrick
Deer	Morag Shirran
Mormond	Janice Robinson
Ugie	Emma-Jane Whitehead

b) Procedures for school staff to follow in cases of possible child abuse

Full details of the steps that all staff must follow in cases of suspected child abuse are given in the flow chart on page 4 and on the card issued to all staff.

c) Confidentiality

It is essential that staff do not promise confidentiality to a child or young person. Staff who become aware of a possible child protection case should discuss the matter only with the essential personnel referred to above. Any notes made by staff must be passed on to the designated person.

d) Parental/Carer Information

Parents/carers are informed that the school has a responsibility to take action if we think that any child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse. This information is given through a statement published annually in the School Prospectus. This statement informs parents that we are required to refer any cases of possible abuse or neglect directly to the Social Work Department, the Police or the Reporter. Parents are not normally informed if the school has to refer a child to one of these agencies.

e) The importance of the NESCP and Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection Guidelines

These guidelines set out clear procedures that schools **must follow** in cases where child abuse is suspected. Members of the Guidance Team are fully familiar with these guidelines. Other members of staff are not expected to be fully familiar with these guidelines but to be aware of this school policy and procedures. The school policy interprets the NESCP and Aberdeenshire guidelines into steps and actions that the school has to follow. It is therefore essential that all staff follow the steps set out in the flow chart on page 4.

STEP 1

Member of staff becomes concerned about possible child abuse.

Concerns may arise as a result of –

- a disclosure from a pupil, some obvious change in the pupil or their behaviour, information passed on from others (e.g. friends of the pupil), any other evidence that arouses concern or suspicion of possible abuse. (e.g. written or graphical work)
- If a pupil makes a disclosure to you it is very important to respond to this appropriately. The notes on page 5 give some advice on how best to deal with such situations...



STEP 2

Make a note of your concerns.

Include any evidence that you may have seen or heard that confirm your concerns. It can be easy to forget details if notes are not made.



STEP 3

Speak to the school's Designated Child Protection person or the pupil's Guidance Teacher.

- If neither of the above are available speak to any other member of the SMT or any other Guidance Teacher. Do this as soon as possible. Pass all notes you have made to this person.
- If you are concerned that the child may be at immediate risk then ensure that you do this immediately. It can often be important for the school to ensure that action to support a child is taken before the end of the school day.



Beyond Step 3 the matter will be dealt with by the Designated Person and Guidance staff

STEP 4

Designated Person and relevant Pastoral Care staff discuss the matter and decide on next steps.

- The guidance in the NESPC Child Protection Guidelines Education section will be used to advise the decisions made.
- In cases where it is considered that further action is definitely required or further advice is needed the Designated Person and Guidance Teacher decide who will contact the Social Work Department and/or Police as considered necessary. The Designated Person and Guidance Teacher will brief each other on the outcome of discussions and action resulting from discussion with outside agencies. It is essential that both staff are fully aware of the circumstances of the case.
- The Designated Person will brief the Head Teacher about the situation.
- In all cases, incidents should be logged and recorded using the standard format set out in the NESPC Guidelines. An electronic version of this form is available. The Designated Person will retain a copy of this log. A copy must also be sent to the Education Network Manager.

4. Advice on dealing with disclosures

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

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Take notes

Reassure

- Reassure the pupils, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example, don't make any promises you may not be able to keep, like *"I'll stay with you"* or *"Everything will be all right"*.
- **Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer.**
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example you could say: *"You're not to blame"*
"You're not the only one this sort of thing happens to"

React

- React to the pupil only as far as it 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 do next?" (This assumes he did)
"Did he touch your private parts?"
- Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do ask open questions like: *"Anything else to tell me?"* *"And?"* or *"Yes?"*
- Do not criticise the perpetrator, the pupils 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

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court
- Record date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used rather than translating them
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

Remember

- To follow the School guidelines.
- Pass on information to the Designated Person or Guidance Teacher in addition to taking the issue forward they may have other relevant information.

Relax

- Get some support for yourself if you need it. The designated person and Guidance Team are always willing to help or advise you in such circumstances.

Appendix 1

Standards for the Protection of Young People, the full document is available at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/03/19102/34603>

Standard 1

Children get the help they need when they need it

Standard 2

Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children

Standard 3

Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected

Standard 4

Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them

Standard 5

Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans

Standard 6

Professionals are competent and confident

Standard 7

Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children

Standard 8

Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness

Appendix 2

Child Protection Guidelines

Key Points for Staff

General Points

- The North East Scotland Child Protection Committee provide extensive Guidelines. What follows is a guide to the key action points for staff from these guidelines.
- Child Abuse is not only seen as physical injury but can manifest in a child's behaviour, particularly a change in behaviour.
- Every school has a named person responsible for Child Protection. In Mintlaw Academy this is Helen Bryce DHT. In her absence see another member of SMT or a PT Guidance.
- If you have any queries about the content of this card or about child protection in general please speak to the named person.

What to do:

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child:

- Discuss your concerns straight away with the relevant Guidance teacher who will report them to the named person in school. In the absence or unavailability of the Guidance teacher go straight to the named person.

What to do:

If a child or young person discloses to you that they or one of their friends/relatives have been abused:

- Stay calm
- Do not offer or promise confidentiality
- Let them know that you must pass the matter on
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame
- Remember that it is not your responsibility to investigate further
- Refer to the named person in school immediately

In all cases record keeping is essential, take brief factual notes of any injuries and/or concerns. Include the child's name and sign and date records prior to submission to the named person.

What happens if I'm wrong?

If you had genuine concerns then you did the right thing in speaking to someone.

What happens after I have made my referral?

- The named person collates all relevant information about the situation
 - The named person then makes a referral to Social Work
- Social Work inform the school of the outcome of referral and advise on any action to be taken by the school