



## Community Services: Education

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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

### Management Circular on Child Protection and Safeguarding

**This Management Circular replaces MC 3.23 and associated Guidelines. This document should be used as the establishment's Child Protection and Safeguarding guidance and practice framework.**

#### Introduction What do we mean by child protection and safeguarding?

**Child Protection** - Protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a *likelihood or risk* of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

**Safeguarding** – This is a much wider concept than child protection and refers to promoting the welfare of children, young people and protected adults. It encompasses protecting from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring that they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children, young people and protected adults to have the best outcome. Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Safeguarding is a golden thread that runs through the curriculum. The aim is to support the development of learner's knowledge, skills and resilience to keep themselves safe and protect themselves and to develop an understanding of the world so that they can respond to a range of issues and potential risky situations arising through their lives. As such, it permeates many features of the education experience.

## **Part 1 The National Context of Child Protection**

It is a common responsibility of every member of staff from Education Service and other agencies to:

- protect children from abuse and exploitation;
- respond appropriately when abuse is identified; and
- ensure whenever possible that all children are able to exercise their right to be raised in a warm, stimulating and safe environment with the support of staff, their families and carers.

The aim of these guidelines is to assist all Education Service staff to work in a multidisciplinary context with children and their families to ensure that children are safe.

### **The Child Protection Policy Drivers**

Child protection must be seen in the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Outcomes for Scotland, the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach, the Early Years Framework, the Children's Charter and the Framework for Standards.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under national legislation. The Scottish Government considers the UNCRC as the foundation for its child-centred legislative programme.

Under the terms of the convention, governments are required to meet children's basic needs and help them reach their full potential. Central to this is the acknowledgment that every child has basic fundamental rights. These include:

- each child has a right to be treated as an individual;
- every child who can form a view on matters affecting them has the right to express those views if they so wish, and those views should be given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity;
- parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children and should share that responsibility;
- each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation;

- insofar as is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare, public authorities should promote the upbringing of children by their families; and
- any intervention by a public authority in the life of a child must be properly justified and should be supported by services from all relevant agencies working in collaboration.

### **National Outcomes for Scotland**

The National Outcomes for Scotland include:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- Young people are equipped through their education to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society; and
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk

### **The Centrality of the GIRFEC Practice Model**

Paramount among these principles is that child protection must be seen within the wider context of supporting families and meeting children's needs through GIRFEC. GIRFEC:

- puts children's needs first;
- ensures that children are listened to and understand decisions that affect them; and
- ensures that they get the appropriate co-ordinated support needed to promote, support and safeguard their wellbeing, health and development.

GIRFEC promotes action to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people in eight wellbeing indicators. The wellbeing indicators state that children and young people must be: healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and, above all in this context, **safe**. The primary indicator for child protection is to keep a child **safe** and, in so doing, attention is given to other areas of wellbeing as appropriate.

For more information on GIRFEC in Argyll and Bute please go to;

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/girfec>

### **Early Years Framework**

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The Early Years Framework supports the delivery of the wellbeing indicators through a pro-active early intervention approach. The Early Years Framework provides a range of learning and care support for families with young children, from birth up until starting school, to ensure that all children get the best possible start in life.

For more information on the Early Years Framework in Argyll and Bute please go to;

( <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/early-years> )

### **The Children's Charter and the Framework for Standards**

The Children's Charter was drawn up in 2004 following consultation with children and young people as part of the Scottish Government's child protection reform programme.

The Charter reflects children and young people's own views regarding what they need and the standard of care they expect when they have problems or are in difficulty and need to be protected. It shows that children and young people place more value on relationships and attitudes than processes and events. This should be reflected in the planning and implementation of all child-focused interventions

The Framework for Standards is the detailed means for translating the commitments made in the Children's Charter into practice. In working with children and their families, all practitioners should strive to adhere to the following best practice standards.

More information on the Children's Charter and Framework for Standards can be found at;

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/04/19082/34411>

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

### **Equality and diversity**

Child protection policy and procedure must pay due attention to equality and diversity issues. Access to, and delivery of, child protection services should be fair, consistent, reliable and focused on individual outcomes and enablement. Service users should be listened to, respected and responded to. There should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment or on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.

For information on Argyll and Bute Council's Equality and Diversity policy go to:

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<http://intranet.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/equality-and-diversity-policy>

## **Our Children, Their Future**

Within an Argyll and Bute context, all the above values and principles are embedded within the Education Services Our Children, Their Future, vision and strategy document which aspires to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for our children to grow up. Our vision is that together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

Information on Our Children, Their Future can be found at;

[https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/argyll\\_bute\\_vision\\_strategy\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/argyll_bute_vision_strategy_final_web.pdf)

## **Part 2 Definitions and Circumstances**

### **What is a child?**

There are several definitions of child in legislation ranging from under age of 16 to underage of 18. However, to avoid any confusion, these guidelines and procedures apply to every child and young person enrolled in an Argyll and Bute educational establishment or partnership provider.

### **What is a parent/carer?**

A 'parent' is defined as someone who is the genetic or adoptive mother or father of the child. A birth mother always has full parental rights and responsibilities unless they are removed by a court order. A father has parental rights and responsibilities;

- if he is or was married to the mother at the time of the child's conception or subsequently, or
- if the child's birth has been registered after 4 May 2006 and he has been registered as the father of the child on the child's birth certificate.
- A father may also acquire parental responsibilities or rights by entering into a formal agreement with the mother or by making an application to the courts.
- Same sex couples in a marriage or civil partnership may also acquire parental rights and the process of adoption confers full parental rights on both adoptive parents.

A 'carer' is someone other than a parent who has rights/responsibilities for looking after a child or young person.

### **What is child abuse?**

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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.

There are 4 categories of child abuse.

- 1 Physical Abuse: Deliberately hurting a child causing injuries.
- 2 Sexual Abuse: Forcing, enticing or persuading a child to take part in sexual activities. There are two types of sexual abuse - Contact and Non-Contact
- 3 Emotional Abuse: The on-going emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child
- 4 Neglect: The on-going failure to meet a child's basic needs

Full definitions of each of the 4 categories can be found at paragraphs 34 – 37 of the National Guidance for Child Protection 2014 which can be found at;

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00450733.pdf>

### **Risk and assessment of risk**

Understanding the concept of risk is critical to child protection. Risk is the **likelihood** or **probability** of a particular outcome given the presence of factors in a child or young person's life. Risk is part and parcel of everyday life. Only where risks cause, or are likely to cause, significant harm to a child would a response under child protection be required. Where a child has already been exposed to actual harm, assessment will mean looking at the extent to which they are at risk of repeated harm and at the potential effects of continued exposure over time. Consideration should also be given to the risk posed by the potential perpetrator.

### **Indicators of risk**

When making judgements about the risks and needs of a child, there are a range of indicators that should trigger assessment and, where appropriate, action. Not all the indicators mentioned below are common; nor should their presence lead to any immediate assumptions about the levels of risk for an individual child. Where identified, though, they should act as a prompt for all staff, whether in an adult or child care setting, to consider how they may impact on a child. Indicators of potential risk will often – particularly for children in vulnerable circumstances – occur together. Indicators of risk should therefore be considered not in isolation but in relation to all the relevant aspects of a child and family's circumstances. Where there are a number of risk factors in a child's life, attention should be paid to the cumulative impact on the child.

Intervention and support through a multi-agency approach using GIRFEC practice and procedures.

**The child's needs are of paramount importance at all times.**

- Domestic abuse
- Parental problematic alcohol and drug use
- Disability
- Non-engaging families
- Children and young people experiencing or affected by mental health problems
- Children and young people who display harmful or problematic sexual behaviour
- Female genital mutilation
- Honour-based violence and forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Sudden unexpected death in infants and children

### **Other Circumstances**

As well as the above 4 categories of child abuse, there are other circumstances where children are potentially at greater risk of harm and abuse. These include;

- Complex child abuse investigations
- Child trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Historical reports of abuse
- Children who are looked after away from home
- Online and mobile phone child safety
- Children and young people who place themselves at risk
- Children and young people who are missing
- Under-age sexual activity
- Bullying

Some of the more complex circumstances where safeguarding is required are considered in more detail below.

#### **1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (See Appendix 1)**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.

**There is no typical victim.** There is no one way that CSE is perpetrated, grooming is common and online and contact exploitation can overlap. Children may appear to co-operate but it cannot be taken as consent and they may be subject to forms of coercion and control.

- Boys and girls can be victims
- Children/young people with learning difficulties
- Children/young people from all ethnic backgrounds
- Children/young people from all sexual orientations

Further information on CSE can be found at;

**Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Practitioner Briefing Paper**

<https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00508563.pdf>

**National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation Progress Report 2016/17**

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00515937.pdf>

**Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Summary**

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00508567.pdf>

## **2 Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage**

Honour-based violence is a spectrum of criminal conduct with threats and abuse at one end and honour killing at the other. Such violence can occur when perpetrators believe that a relative/community member, who may be a child, has shamed the family and/or the community by breaking their honour code. The punishment may include assault, abduction, confinement, threats and murder. The type of incidents that constitute a perceived transgression include:

- perceived inappropriate make-up or dress;
- having a boyfriend/girlfriend;
- forming an inter-faith relationship;
- kissing or intimacy in a public place;
- pregnancy outside marriage; and
- rejecting a forced marriage.

A forced marriage is defined as 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 pressure. A clear distinction must be made between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage is one in which the families of both spouses are primarily responsible for choosing a marriage partner for their child or relative, but the final decision as to whether or not to accept the arrangement lies with the potential spouses. Both spouses give their full and free consent. The tradition of arranged marriage has operated successfully within many communities for generations.

In Scotland, a couple cannot be legally married unless both parties are at least 16 on the day of the wedding and are capable of understanding the nature of a marriage ceremony and of consenting to the marriage. Parental consent is not required.

The consequences of forced marriage can be devastating to the whole family, but especially to the young people affected. They may become estranged from their families and wider communities, lose out on educational opportunities or suffer domestic abuse. Rates of suicide and self-harm within forced marriages are high.

Some of the potential indicators of honour-based violence and forced marriage pertinent to education are:

- Absence and persistent absence from education;
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to a country of origin;
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality;
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility;
- Being prevented from attending extra-curricular activities; and
- Being prevented from going on to further/higher education.

### **3 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation is a culture-specific abusive practice affecting some communities. It should always trigger child protection concerns. The legal definition of female genital mutilation is 'to excise, infibulate or otherwise mutilate the whole or any part of the labia majora, labia minora, prepuce of the clitoris, clitoris or vagina'.

The procedure performed at various ages including babies and adolescents, but more commonly carried out on children aged between four and ten years. It is a deeply rooted cultural practice in

certain African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities. Justifications for female genital mutilation may include:

- tradition;
- family honour;
- religion;
- increased male sexual pleasure;
- hygiene; and
- fear of exclusion from communities.

FGM includes all procedures which involve the total or partial removal of the external female genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are four types of female genital mutilation ranging from a symbolic jab to the vagina to the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia. A range of health problems, both immediate and long-term, can be associated with the procedure, and in some cases can lead to death. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 makes it illegal to perform or arrange to have female genital mutilation carried out in Scotland or abroad and carries a sentence of up to 14 years' imprisonment.

Female genital mutilation is usually done for strong cultural reasons and this must always be kept in mind. However, cultural considerations and sensitivities should not override the professional need to take action to protect a child. Action should be taken in close collaboration with other agencies and the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration. **Female genital mutilation should always be seen as a cause of significant harm and normal child protection procedures should always be invoked.** Some distinctive factors will need consideration:

- female genital mutilation is usually a single event of physical abuse (albeit with very severe physical and mental consequences);
- there is a risk that a child or young person is likely to be sent abroad to have the procedure performed;
- where a child or young person within a family has been subjected to female genital mutilation, consideration needs to be given to other female siblings or close relatives who may also be at risk;
- a planning meeting should be arranged if the above conditions are met, where appropriate specialist health expertise should be sought;
- where other child protection concerns are present they should be part of the risk assessment process. They may include factors such as trafficking or forced marriage.
- appropriate interpreters who are totally independent of the child or young person's family should be used, and

- legal advice should be obtained where appropriate.

### **Further Information**

A protocol on FGM has been produced by the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee. For further information go to;

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publications-practice-and-guidance>

## **4 Online and mobile phone child safety**

New technologies, digital media and the internet are an integral part of children's lives. Whether on a computer at school or at home, a tablet, a games console or mobile/smart phone, children and young people are increasingly accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are. This has enabled entirely new forms of social interaction to emerge, for example, through social networking websites and online gaming. But these new technologies also bring a variety of risks from adults and peers, such as:

- exposure to obscene, violent or distressing material;
- bullying, coercion or intimidation through email and online (cyber-bullying);
- identity theft and abuse of personal information;
- pro-eating disorder, self-harm or suicide sites; and
- sexual exploitation by online predators – for example, grooming – often through social networking sites. **(See section on Child Sexual Exploitation)**

Children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners need to understand the risks the internet and mobile technology can pose so that they can make sensible and informed choices. Practitioners and carers need to support young people to use the internet and mobile technology responsibly, and know how to respond when something goes wrong. **Therefore, online and digital safety should be an essential part of a school's personal and social education programme.**

### **Further Information**

Further information and resources can be found at:

The Scottish Government National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/04/1061>

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

NSPCC

[WithScotland Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online: Balancing Risk and Opportunity](#)

## 5 Child Trafficking

Child trafficking typically exposes children to continuous and severe risk of significant harm. It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and/or receipt of a child for purposes of exploitation. This definition holds whether or not there has been any coercion or deception, as children are not considered capable of informed consent to such activity. It applies to activity **within** a country as well as **between** countries.

Children are trafficked for a number of reasons within and between countries and continents. They may be trafficked for one type of exploitation but sold into another, making simple categorisation problematic. Forms of exploitation of child victims of trafficking include:

- child labour, for example, on cannabis farms;
- debt bondage;
- domestic servitude;
- begging;
- benefit fraud;
- drug trafficking/decoys;
- illegal adoptions;
- forced/illegal marriage;
- sexual abuse; and
- sexual exploitation.

Child trafficking can be difficult to identify. There are two distinctive issues related to child trafficking that make handling more complex than in many other child protection cases: identification; and wider legal concerns. Tackling child trafficking requires a multi-agency response at all levels and the establishment child protection coordinator should be aware of the national and local guidance which exists on child trafficking in order to provide the appropriate advice and guidance to staff.

If an agency or practitioner believes that a child they are in contact with is, or may have been, trafficked they should initially contact social services. The child's safety remains the principal consideration and all necessary actions and inter-agency child protection procedures should be followed to ensure that they are protected.

**It is essential to take timely and decisive action where child trafficking is suspected because of the high risk of the child being moved.** Action should not be postponed until a child realises, agrees or divulges that they have been trafficked. Often, children are threatened with punishment if they speak. Also, they may not be aware that they are victims of trafficking.

In cases where a child may have been trafficked, their carer may be involved in the trafficking or exploitation. Seeking their consent could put the child at further risk or lead to their being moved elsewhere. Unless there is clear evidence that seeking consent would in no way harm the child, referring agencies should not seek the carer's consent for children under 16. For children aged 16-17, consent would not be sought from parents.

### **Further information**

An Argyll and Bute Child Trafficking Protocol is available at;

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publications-practice-and-guidance>

Scottish National Guidance on child trafficking *Safeguarding Children in Scotland Who May Have Been Trafficked* provides definitions, indicators, child protection processes and roles and responsibilities of agencies. This is available at;

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2009/02/18092546/2>

NSPCC National Child Trafficking Advice Centre is available at;

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/childrens-services/child-trafficking-advice-centre-ctac/>

NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL) is a service for anyone with concerns about human trafficking. The number (during office hours) is 0800 107 7057.

<https://www.nwgnetwork.org/services/child-trafficking-advice-information-line-ctail-nspcc/>

## **6 PREVENT**

The UK Government PREVENT strategy was introduced in 2011 as part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy. PREVENT is, in essence, a safeguarding public protection process. The aim of the PREVENT strategy is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and thereby reduce the threat of terrorism in the UK.

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Delivery of the PREVENT strategy is coordinated at a national level by the Scottish Government and Police Scotland working in conjunction with a number of national organisations, local partners and communities.

The PREVENT strategy has three specific focuses activity on three aims:

**Ideologies** Responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it.

**Individuals** Preventing individuals from being drawn into terrorism, ensuring they are given appropriate advice and are supported.

**Institutions** Working with institutions where there are risks from radicalisation.

Local authorities have a duty to take cognisance of the aims of the PREVENT strategy. PREVENT can be expressed through the curriculum, for example, in highlighting the importance of global citizenship and engaging young people in a healthy, democratic society, all of which are relevant to stopping people becoming involved in, or supporting, terrorism. It may also be apparent in any assessments of children using the wellbeing indicators under the GIRFEC procedures.

Further information on PREVENT can be found at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445978/3799\\_Revised\\_Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_Scotland\\_V2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445978/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_Scotland_V2.pdf)

### **Part 3 Information Sharing**

Several reviews have looked at the effectiveness of child protection systems following the deaths of children. (See, for example, enquiry reports concerning Liam Fee, Caleb Ness, Brandon Muir, Baby P and Victoria Climbié) All have indicated the crucial importance of appropriate and effective sharing of information between professionals in order to protect children.

#### **Information-sharing for child protection: general principles**

- The wellbeing of a child is of central importance when making decisions to lawfully share information with or about them.
- Children have a right to express their views and have them taken into account when decisions are made about what should happen to them.
- The reasons why information needs to be shared and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.

- We may consider obtaining the consent of the child (depending on age and maturity) to share information, however there is no legal requirement to obtain consent as the legal basis for sharing information when there is a risk to the child's wellbeing. In these circumstances relevant information can be shared with other individuals or agencies as appropriate under relevant statutory powers e.g. under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
- At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know.
- When gathering information about possible risks to a child, information should be sought from all relevant sources, including services that may be involved with other family members. Relevant historical information should also be taken into account.
- Please also consider discussing the position in relation to the sharing of information with the Council's Data Protection Officer, Iain Jackson (01546 604188), Sheila MacFadyen, Legal Services (01546 604265) or Fiona Anderson, Governance Unit (01546 604255)

When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent. Similarly, any decision **not** to share information and the rationale should also be recorded. It is not necessary to seek consent when there is legislative requirement to share information; for example when making a referral to the Children's Reporter, or the prevention and detection of crime.

### **Storing Child Protection information**

The principal repositories for child information within Education Services are SEEMiS Click & Go and the Pupil Personal Record (PPR).

SEEMiS Click & Go is the electronic database of pupil information. The information in SEEMiS allows statistical information such as attendance, absence and exclusion data to be easily accessed and interrogated. The Pastoral Notes section allows information to be inputted which can be later used to form a chronology if required.

In addition, each pupil has a PPR folder which is stored securely on the school premises. This is used to record important information which is held on paper.

Access to both SEEMiS and the paper forms of records should be restricted to authorised personnel only and a system of signing in and out should be in place for anyone accessing any part of a child's file.

As there may be occasions when information relating to child protection may not be seen by parents/carers (particularly where there is a suspicion that parent/carers are the abusers or

complicit with the suspected abuse), child protection information in paper form should not be integrated with other information but collated in chronological order within a **separate** folder. This also allows essential sensitive information to be accessed easily for review and audit purposes.

Separate storage of CP folders will depend on the circumstances of the school. However these are normally kept either as an appendix to the PPR within the same filing cabinet or completely separate in their own locked cabinet. Whichever system is preferred, the following apply:

- CP files kept securely
- Restricted access
- CP info stored separately from other info/PPRs
- CPO info can be easily accessed by authorised individuals when required

### **A Parent/ Carers Right to Information**

In general, parents and carers with parental responsibilities have the right to access information about their child. In situations where staff are unsure if a parent has parental responsibilities and there is an issue about whether this individual can have access to information about a child or whether the individual can remove the child from school, staff should err on the side of caution in the child's interest and seek the necessary information that will ensure the child's safety.

## **Part 4 Child Protection Structures and Procedures in Argyll and Bute**

### **Chief Officers' Groups**

A Chief Officers Group consisting of the Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council, local Health Board and local police commanders are responsible for ensuring that their agencies, individually and collectively, work to protect children and young people as effectively as possible. They also have responsibility for maximising the involvement of those agencies not under their direct control, including the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the third sector.

Chief Officers are individually and collectively responsible for the leadership, direction and scrutiny of their respective child protection services and their Child Protection Committees. Chief Officers are responsible for overseeing the commissioning of all child protection services and are accountable for this work and its effectiveness.

### **The Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee**

The Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a locally-based, inter-agency strategic partnership responsible for the design, development, publication, distribution, dissemination, CP and safeguarding guidelines

implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and wider third sectors in the Argyll and Bute local authority area. Its role is to provide individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services across Argyll and Bute.

The functions of the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee are continuous improvement, strategic planning, public information and communication. The Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee has produced a range of guidelines, protocols and multi-agency training opportunities to support staff who work with children. These can be accessed at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publications-practice-and-guidance#agency> (See Appendix 2 for more information.)

### **Child Protection Committee and Sub-Groups and Activities**

To fulfil its functions the CPC runs a number of multi-agency groups and activities each tasked with fulfilling a particular support and improvement role. These include:

#### **Groups**

##### **Practice, Policy and Quality Assurance**

A multi-agency sub-group to develop the CPC Strategic plan and ensure it is on track to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. The CPC Strategic Plan sets out high-level aims and objectives to improve services to keep children safe and strategies to meet them.

##### **Learning and development**

A sub-group which devises and offers a programme of interagency child protection training.

##### **Initial Response Discussion (IRD)**

A multi-agency sub-group which analyses the quality of initial intervention in child protection investigations.

##### **Early Effective Information (EEI)**

A multi-agency group to consider the most appropriate means of support to children and young people in situations of domestic abuse, going missing and youth offending.

#### **Activities**

##### **Audit of CP information/files**

A multi-agency scrutiny exercise to ensure the quality of child protection activities within each service and across services is of an acceptable standard.

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### **Self-evaluation**

A series of events which engages with practitioners to evaluate the quality of work and identify areas for improvement.

### **Initial Case Review (ICR)**

An Initial Case Review (ICR) is a process carried out by the Child Protection Committee (CPC) after receiving a report of a possible significant case. The CPC will consider whether the information is sufficient to reach a decision on the need for a Significant Case Review.

### **Significant Case Review (SCR)**

A group with multi-agency representation as appropriate to consider the actions of services in relation to certain situations where a child has died or when a child has not died but has sustained significant harm or risk of significant harm, under one or more of the categories of abuse and neglect.

For more information on the work of the Argyll and Bute CPC go to;

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/abcpc>

## **Part 5 Operational Guidance for Staff**

Education Service staff need to be aware of their own responsibilities in relation to child protection:

- All Education Service staff have a professional and contractual duty to report child protection concerns.
- Education Service staff are required to follow the procedures outlined in this Management Circular to protect and support children where child protection concerns exist.
- Where procedures as detailed in these professional guidelines are followed, staff will be fully supported by the Education Service.
- Staff have a duty to cooperate with any enquiry or investigation arising from a child protection concern which, in some circumstances, may involve a criminal investigation by Police Scotland.
- Should a case go to court, staff should be aware that citation as a witness or formal requests made by a court involve a legal obligation to comply.

The common responsibilities of staff from Education Services and other agencies are to protect children from abuse and exploitation, to respond appropriately when abuse is identified, and to ensure whenever possible that all children are able to exercise their right to be raised in a warm, stimulating and safe environment with the support of staff, their families and carers.

In exercising these responsibilities, staff must adhere to the procedures contained in the Education Service guidelines and the West of Scotland Inter-agency practice framework adopted by the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee. These procedures can be accessed from the link below:

<http://www.proceduresonline.com/westofscotland/>

### **The Role of Head of Establishment**

The head is the key member of staff with responsibility for all child protection issues. The role of the head or child protection co-ordinator is to react swiftly and appropriately to a situation which causes reasonable grounds for concern about child abuse.

Responsibilities include:

- ensuring that child protection guidelines and procedures are brought to the attention of all staff annually; (this appears as Appendix 3)
- ensuring, as appropriate, that all staff know that there is a named child protection co-ordinator;
- ensuring that temporary staff are aware of and have access to the child protection guidelines and procedures;
- enabling attendance at appropriate child protection training for self and staff;
- contributing to the work of the Argyll and Bute CPC such as audit and self-evaluation activities;
- advising, assisting and supporting staff members as appropriate;
- establishing a positive ethos which supports and values children and contributes to their welfare and general protection;
- ensuring that national and local child protection priorities are reflected within the curriculum;
- informing the Parent Council and parents of establishment procedures and initiatives in relation to child protection; and
- including relevant child protection information in establishment handbook

All heads of educational establishments must discuss with staff the issue of child protection and the relevant procedures at least annually and presentation materials are available to assist with this. Child protection information should also be made known to newly appointed members of staff when they take up post and to absence cover staff and visiting teachers.

### **The Child Protection Co-ordinator**

CP and safeguarding guidelines

All education establishments should have a child protection co-ordinator who will provide a professional lead on all matters relating to child protection in that establishment. This will normally be the head teacher/ head of establishment but, depending on the circumstances, this role may be delegated to another senior manager. If the role is delegated the head of establishment still has the overall responsibility to ensure that child protection arrangements in the establishment are effective.

In order to maximise the competence and confidence of staff to deal with child protection concerns, the establishment child protection co-ordinator should give due consideration to the training needs of staff. This can be addressed through the annual professional review and development/ professional development and review meeting (as appropriate).

### **Action in response to grounds for concern**

Education Services staff must treat an allegation or suspicion of child abuse as a priority for urgent consideration and take action which is in the best interests of the child. Any concern or allegation of child abuse should be reported **immediately** to the head of establishment or the child protection coordinator if there are grounds for concern about the possibility of abuse.

It is vitally important that staff must not promise to keep secret any allegations or concerns about child abuse, even if a child or third person requests this. Staff have a professional obligation to pass on information to relevant agencies and there is no guarantee that the source of a referral can be kept confidential, although the sharing of child protection information should be on a 'need to know basis'. The passing of information in order to protect a child would be considered in the public interest and if a child is considered to be at risk of harm then relevant information **must always be shared**.

Grounds for concern can arise from a wide range of circumstances and will generally be covered by the following circumstances:

- A child states that abuse has taken place or that the child feels unsafe.
- A third party or anonymous allegation is received.
- A child's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statement(s) causes suspicion of abuse.

In all cases, if the head or child protection co-ordinator consider that there is a possibility of abuse then the matter must be reported **immediately** to the duty senior social worker at the local area Social Work office followed by the submission of the formal incident form. In discussion with the duty senior social worker the following matters should be covered:

- details of the grounds for concern;
- reporting the matter to the police and/or local health authority;
- consideration of whether there are support implications for siblings and other children;
- immediate support needs of child/children involved;
- how and when parents will be informed;
- further action to be taken by the head; and
- action to be taken by Social Work.

This telephone discussion with social work will allow a second assessment on the situation as presented to be obtained and as to whether the concern should be immediately treated as child protection or whether other avenues of support should be considered and how to then proceed.

### **Recording Concerns**

Where there is a concern of the possibility of abuse, a confidential incident file using the Child Protection Recording Form should be opened immediately for keeping records of all statements and actions taken by education staff and any actions agreed with social work.

If there is any difference of opinion on any matter between the education service representative reporting the concern and the duty senior social worker this should also be recorded in the incident file. The Area Education Manager should also be informed of this difference of opinion as this requires to be resolved.

A copy of this report and subsequent reports, as well as minutes of child protection conferences and monitoring meetings, should be kept in the confidential incident file.

The key features of the report as recorded in the child protection recording form are that it should be:

- accurate
- objective
- concise
- immediate
- confidential
- dated
- signed

All staff involved should be asked to make a written note of all relevant information and these statements should be placed in the incident file. It is vital that the incident file be comprehensive and accurate as it might become legal evidence at a later stage.

The Child Protection Recording and Referral Form appears as Appendix 4.

When collating information it should be ensured that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount even if this results in tensions between the rights of the child and the rights of parents;
- a future investigation is not contaminated by the information gathering process;
- all information concerning the child and the circumstances is treated as confidential;
- the sharing and discussion of information is on a 'need to know' basis; and
- practitioners should consider all cases with an open mind and not make any assumptions about whether abuse has, or has not, occurred.

### Seeking Clarification

You may be uncertain as to whether the grounds for concern indicate that there is a possibility that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse. In such circumstances it may be that such concerns need to be substantiated in order to ascertain whether a referral be made or not. Therefore, **for factual clarification purposes only**, it is appropriate to ask an open question of whoever is making the allegation, e.g. 'Could you tell me more?' Such questioning is intended to encourage the speaker to give an accurate account of what has happened, in their own words and without pressure and suggestion. **This is not, and should not be, an investigative interview in order to obtain proof.**

Great care should be taken if the questioning for clarification is undertaken with the child who may be the subject of abuse. Open ended questions **must** be used to enable the child to give the information they have, in the order they wish to give it, with the detail they wish to provide and using their own words to describe their experiences.

The child must not be subjected to a series of interviews by different adults. If you consider that additional questioning of the child is necessary for clarification, the member of staff who was initially involved with the child should be supported in obtaining this, where possible. There should be no more questions asked than is absolutely necessary and where any questioning is non-productive then it should stop immediately. Further questioning runs the risk of contaminating any formal investigation which may be conducted. A note should be taken of all clarification meetings. This note should be signed and dated and should clearly include the decision reached, including No Further Action, with associated reasons. Parents should be notified of any instances where it has been necessary to clarify child protection concerns where parents or family members are not implicated in those concerns.

If possible a member of staff should not talk to the child alone and proper consideration should be given as to the identity of the other appropriate adult. If there is a concern around the possibility of a child being subject to inappropriate sexual behaviour by an adult then it is strongly recommended that there are two trusted members of staff at any discussion with the child to clarify the concern.

Initially, in attempting to decide how to respond to the grounds for concern, a head teacher may decide to seek advice. This Management Circular should always be consulted in the first instance. Further advice can be obtained from:

- the Education Service Child Protection Lead Officer
- Area Education Manager
- Area Education Officer
- Legal advice can be obtained from legal service at Governance and Law, Kilmory

Social Work should be involved whenever there is a possibility of child abuse. It may be that initial advice is sought from a member of social work rather than immediately reporting to the duty senior social worker. If so doing, such a discussion could result in social work deciding to start formal investigative procedures if it is felt that a threshold for intervention has been reached.

### **Emerging concerns**

Where there is an **emerging** concern the head of establishment may wish to discuss their concerns with the local social work duty manager. It is also possible to make a request to the local social work area manager for a case discussion meeting which allows representatives from a number of agencies to discuss any emerging concerns to allow a broader picture to be established and possible courses of action to be considered. A child's welfare will be of paramount importance.

### **Emergency situations**

**If a medical emergency exists, then the head teacher must act immediately to ensure medical treatment.** First aid and urgent removal to hospital accompanied by an appropriate member of staff would be a priority, followed by immediate notification to social work, police and parents, as appropriate.

Where it is known or strongly suspected that a child has been the victim of violence or exposed to immediate physical risk, then a formal child protection referral must be made immediately to social work.

Any complaint or suspicion that a child has been significantly harmed by a person unknown to the child and family should be immediately reported to the police.

The police must also be contacted immediately when there are urgent circumstances such as the immediate avoidance of further abuse, the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, the avoidance of the destruction of evidence and/or the need for emergency Child Protection Measures.

A copy of the CP Action Guidance appears as Appendix 5.

### **Children Engaged in Under Age Sexual Activity**

Where there is a concern that children under 16 are engaged in sexual activity, please refer to the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee protocol entitled;

[Best Practice Protocol In Responding To Concern Where Children Are Engaged In Under Age Sexual Activity](#)

### **Suspected abuse by a member of staff**

Any complaint or suspicion that a member of staff has been involved in causing significant harm to a child must be reported immediately to the appropriate Education Service Senior Manager. Decisions will then be made on how to proceed.

### **Support for Staff**

It is recognised that dealing with concerns or suspicions relating to child abuse can have stressful consequences for staff. Support for staff in these circumstances is essential not only in order to meet the needs of the staff involved in the child protection process but also to meet the ongoing needs of the children concerned.

In all interactions between staff involved in child protection there has to be sensitivity to the possibility that some members of staff may have personal experiences of child abuse. A member of staff may choose to disclose personal experiences and may require to be directed to appropriate sources of help.

It is the responsibility of the head of establishment or service in liaison with the child protection co-ordinator to arrange appropriate support to staff. Care must be taken to ensure that staff are protected from unacceptable levels of stress.

Proactive staff support can be provided by ensuring:

- the child protection coordinator is confident in giving child protection advice to staff;
- staff are aware of child protection guidelines and procedures;
- staff receive appropriate training;
- staff are confident in their knowledge of child protection procedures and their role within them;
- ensuring the establishment Child Protection Coordinator is confident in their responsibilities; and
- inclusion of child protection in the professional review and development process.

Reactive staff support can be obtained by making staff aware of the Council Employee Assistance Programme and Counselling Service. This can be contacted on 0800 030 5182 or at [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com). Members of the Education Psychology Service may be able to provide supportive intervention on a localised individual basis but do not provide a universal service to education staff.

### **Appearing in Court**

Should staff be cited to appear in court in relation to an instance of child abuse, they will require specific support in relation to court proceedings. The Council's legal services will ensure that members of staff are offered the appropriate support.

## **Part 6 The Process of Child Protection**

### **A Initial Referral Discussion (IRD)**

The Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) is a first stage child protection investigation led by social work, health and Police Scotland personnel in order to establish the facts regarding a potential crime or offence against a child, and to gather and share information to inform the assessment of risk and need for that child, and the need for any protective action.

It is, therefore, **not** the responsibility of education staff to investigate suspected or alleged abuse, evaluate the grounds for concern or seek proof of any allegations. Any actions which could be interpreted in these ways could potentially undermine any investigation or prosecution.

This initial investigative stage will be undertaken by specially trained staff from social work and police following structured procedures. The child's Named Person will also be expected to participate in these discussions. For school-aged children and young people this will mean that education establishment staff will be expected to participate in this process.

## **B Child Protection Case Conferences (CPCC)**

Child Protection Case Conferences are a core feature of inter-agency co-operation to protect children and young people. Their primary purpose is to share information and consider whether the child – including an unborn child – is at risk of significant harm and if so, to review an existing Child's Plan and/or devise an outcome focussed multi-agency action plan to reduce the risk of significant harm. CPCCs are formal multi-agency meetings that enable services and agencies to share information, assessments and chronologies in circumstances where there are suspicions or reports of child abuse and neglect. There are four types of CPCC: initial; pre-birth; review; and transfer (see below).

All participants at a CPCC with significant involvement with the child/family have a responsibility to contribute to the decision as to whether or not to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register. Where there is no clear consensus in the discussion, the Chair will use his or her professional judgement to make the final decision, based on an analysis of the issues raised.

## **C The Child Protection Register**

All local authorities are responsible for maintaining a central register of all children – including unborn children – who are the subject of an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. This is called the Child Protection Register. The register has no legal status but provides an administrative system for alerting practitioners that there is sufficient professional concern about a child to warrant an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. Local authority social work services are responsible for maintaining the Register, though the decision to put a child on the register will be based on a multi-agency assessment. Even where a child is not felt to be at risk of significant harm, there will still often be a need to develop a multi-agency Child's Plan and identify a Lead Professional as per the GIRFEC process.

When placing a child on the register, it is no longer necessary to identify a category of registration relating to the primary type of abuse and neglect. Instead, the child's name and details are entered on the register, as well as record the areas of concern identified. The child's parents or carers and, where the child has sufficient age and understanding, the child, will be formally informed about the information held on the register and who has access to it.

Where it is agreed that a child is at risk of significant harm and that their name should be placed on the Child Protection Register, those attending the CPCC are responsible for developing and

agreeing a Child Protection Plan, which will be incorporated into the Child's Plan, and identifying the core group of staff responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the plan.

### **Notification of pupils being placed on the Child Protection Register (CPR)**

The following procedure will be used to notify schools of children who have been registered on the Child Protection register (CPR). This is the same process that is used to record Police Concern Reports.

- The date of being added to the CPR will be added to the pupil's record in SEEMiS Click & Go.
- An alert will then be generated within the Wellbeing Application (WBA) to all staff with Named Person access.
- An email will be sent to the Head Teacher to advise that Wellbeing Information has been added.
- The pupil name will not be included in this email for data protection reasons.

Named Persons must advise their school's Child Protection Coordinator of the pupil's addition to the CPR but also:

- action the alert in the Wellbeing Application.
- Where current procedure dictates that this information is recorded in Latest Pastoral Notes then this should also be actioned.

If an alert is received complete the fields in the Action Log in WBA with the following information:

Description: CP notification

Log Action: School CP officer notified

Please also note that if a pupil is removed from the CPR the same process of notification will be used.

### **D Child Protection Plan**

The Child Protection Plan is the principal method to set out the support and interventions. The Plan will detail:

- the perceived risks and needs;
- what is required to reduce these risks and meet those needs;
- who is expected to take any tasks forward including parents/carers and the child themselves.

CP and safeguarding guidelines

- the agreed outcomes for the child or young person;
- key people involved and their responsibilities;
- timescales;
- supports and resources required;
- the agreed outcomes for the child or young person;
- the longer terms needs of the child and young person;
- the process of monitoring and review; and
- any contingency plans.

Responsibility is shared for the Child Protection Plan. Each person involved should be clearly identified in the Plan, and their role and responsibilities set out.

### **E Initial CPCC**

The purpose of an initial CPCC is to allow representatives from across services to share information about a child for whom there are child protection concerns, jointly assess that information and the risk to the child and determine whether there is a likelihood of significant harm through abuse or neglect that needs to be addressed through a multi-agency Child Protection Plan. The initial CPCC should also consider whether the child is safe to remain at home or a referral to the Children's Reporter is required.

### **F Pre-birth CPCC**

The purpose of a pre-birth CPCC is to decide whether serious professional concerns exist about the likelihood of harm through abuse or neglect of an unborn child when they are born.

### **G Review CPCC**

The purpose of a review CPCC is to review the decision to place a child's name on the Child Protection Register or where there are significant changes in the child or family's circumstances. The participants will review the progress of the Child Protection Plan, consider all new information available and decide whether the child's name should remain on the Child Protection Register.

Where a child is no longer considered to be at risk of significant harm the child and their family/carers may still require ongoing support and this should be managed through a multi-agency Child's Plan. Only a review CPCC can deregister a child from the Child Protection Register.

### **H Transfer CPCC**

Transfer CPCCs specifically cover the transfer of information about a child where a Child Protection Plan is currently in place, for instance, if the child or family is moving from one local authority area to another.

#### **I CPCC participants**

The number of people involved in a CPCC should be limited to those with a need to know or those who have a relevant contribution to make. All persons invited to a CPCC need to understand its purpose, functions and the relevance of their particular contribution. **All professional participants require to present a report to the meeting even if unable to attend in person.** The reports should include all relevant information and a chronology. Professional participants have a responsibility to share the content of their report with the child and family in an accessible, comprehensible way unless the reports contain restricted access information.

#### **J Core groups**

A core group is a group of identified individuals, including the child and their parents/carers, who have a crucial role to play in implementing and reviewing the Child Protection Plan. The core group is responsible for ensuring that the plan remains focused on achieving better outcomes for the child by reducing the known risks. Consideration of the involvement of the child should take cognisance of their age and the emotional impact of attending a meeting to discuss the risks they have been placed at.

## **Part 7 Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Potential Signs of CSE (Copyright Barnardos 2018)**

[https://www.barnardos.org.uk/tackling\\_child\\_sexual\\_exploitation.pdf](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/tackling_child_sexual_exploitation.pdf)

#### **1 Mobile phones**

- Increase in phone use or secretive use
- Unexplained phone credit or new phone

Abusers use mobile phones to command or control victims. They may present the phone as a gift. Abusers can use in-built GPS technology to track victims whereabouts.

#### **2 Cars**

- Being picked up or dropped off in cars by unknown adults
- Speaking about car journeys with unknown adults

Abusers may groom young people by offering to give them lifts in cars. They may cruise the streets looking for young people.

#### **3 Sexualised behaviour**

- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour; promiscuity; over-familiarity with strangers; sending sexualised images via internet
- Sexual health problems

Through sexualised behaviour young people may be acting out what has been done to them.

#### **4 Boyfriends/ new friends**

- A significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'friend'

Gangs involved in exploitation will identify a young person and send a man, usually young, good-looking and charming to strike up a relationship with them.

#### **5 Mood swings**

- Mood swings or changes in emotional well-being
- Becoming aggressive or disruptive or very quiet and withdrawn

Young people who have been sexually exploited may experience and exhibit extreme mood swings as they struggle to deal with the impact of abuse.

#### **6 Computer**

- Spending more time, often excessive periods, online
- Becoming increasingly secretive about time spent online

Abusers may target children online, or via smartphones, encouraging them to send messages or even pictures of themselves.

#### **7 Gifts**

- Appearing with unexplained new possessions, such as clothes, jewellery or mobile phones, which cannot plausibly be accounted for

Abusers give victims gifts, buying first their friendship and later their affections, compliance and silence.

#### **8 Drugs and Alcohol**

- Appearing under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or possessing drugs or alcohol

Abusers introduce children to drugs and alcohol as a way of controlling them and creating dependency.

## Appendix 2 Interagency Guidance and Protocols

The Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee Guidance and Protocols can be accessed at;

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publications-practice-and-guidance#agency>

### List of Guidance Documents and Protocols

- [Argyll and Bute Child Trafficking Guidance](#)
- [Argyll and Bute FGM Protocol](#)
- [Pre-birth pathway](#)
- [GORP PROT](#)
- [Recognition and Management Of Maltreatment In Infants \(Children Under The Age Of 1 Year\) - NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde](#)
- [Initial Referral Tripartite Discussion](#)
- [IRTD Recording Form](#)
- [Allegations Against Residential Workers](#) - Protocol and guidance on how agencies should respond, published March 2011.
- [Best Practice Protocol In Responding To Concern Where Children Are Engaged In Under Age Sexual Activity](#) - Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee guidance
- [Getting It Right For Children and Young People Displaying Sexually Harmful Behaviours Protocol](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Protocol On Investigation Of Allegations Of Historical Reports Of Abuse](#)
- [Joint Guidance On The Interface Between Child Protection And Adult Protection](#) -Adult Protection Committee guidance (October 14)
- [Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee Joint Self-Evaluation Strategy 2016-17](#)
- [Working With Neglect: Practice Toolkit](#)

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- [National Risk Framework To Support The Assessment Of Children and Young People](#)
- [Working With Resistance Practitioner Portfolio](#)
- [Getting it Right For Children Affected By Parental Mental Health](#)
- [Young People At Risk Of Self Harm Or Suicide - Integrated Children's Service Guidance](#)
- [A Practitioners Guide to Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Consent to Support Children and Young People's Wellbeing](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool](#)
- [Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Practitioner Briefing Paper](#)
- [Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance](#)

**Appendix 3 CP Coordinator Presentation Slides – see attached PowerPoint**

**Appendix 4 Child Protection Recording and Referral Form**

**CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING AND REFERRAL FORM**

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling's Name(s)	Date of birth	School Attended
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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Name of Parent(s) / Guardian(s) or Carer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child

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Address

---

---

Telephone

---

**THE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

Name of individual who reported grounds for concern to head of establishment (PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Person contacted by the head of establishment \_\_\_\_\_

Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time contacted \_\_\_\_\_

**Copies of this form should be sent as follows:**

- **Original** to local Duty Officer or Social Worker with whom the Child Protection concern was initially raised
- **Copy** to Suzanne Harper, Argyll House, Dunoon for distribution to Head of Education, Lead Officer Child Protection and Principal Educational Psychologist

## Appendix 5

### Grounds for Concern: Action Guidance for Education Services staff

**ALL STAFF should follow Action Steps 1 and 2 as outlined below.**

#### **STEP 1**

**Immediately report** your grounds for concern to the head of establishment or child protection co-ordinator.

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 seek clarification, 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.

**B. Heads and Child Protection Co-ordinators should follow the action points listed below in the order they judge appropriate for the particular circumstances for each case. There should be an absolute minimum of delay in moving through the Action Points.**

## **ACTION POINTS**

Treat the grounds for concern as reported by the member of staff as a priority for action.

- Consider immediate needs of all children involved.
- Take emergency action if required.
- Gather information and if appropriate seek clarification (not proof).
- Ask staff to record relevant information.
- Store all information in a confidential Incident File.

**Immediately report** to the duty senior social worker at the social work area office all cases where you have grounds for concern about child abuse. Discuss with the duty senior social worker the action to be taken, including when and by whom parents will be informed and the child or children interviewed.

**Immediately report** a medical emergency to the medical services and administer first aid if needed before reporting to the duty senior social worker.

Urgent circumstances may require help from the police, e.g. immediate avoidance of further abuse, immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser, avoidance of destruction of evidence.

If a member of staff is alleged to be involved in child abuse then contact should be made with the Education Service Senior Manager. Decisions will then be made regarding appropriate action and the involvement of other services.

**Record** (on the same day) the grounds for concern and action taken using the Child Protection Recording Form. Send the original report and a copy as detailed on the form. Keep a copy of this information, signed and dated, in the Incident File.

**Co-operate** fully with all statutory agencies who may become involved.

**Support** the child or children involved as necessary and appropriate.

**The Difference Between Child Protection and Child Abuse Could Be You.**