



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rothienorman Primary Schools Child Protection Policy is written in line with National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, GIRFEC and the UNCRC to ensure the protection of all pupils within the school and nursery.

### What is child abuse?

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

The Inter Agency Child Protection Guidelines for Aberdeenshire – NESCP Child Protection Guidelines identify four categories of child abuse which must be recorded and acted upon:

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

Any member of staff who suspects child abuse should, without delay, contact the Head Teacher, **Michelle Strachan**, who is the Child Protection Officer.

If the Child Protection Officer is not immediately available then you can contact Zoe Whyte, Head Teacher at Methlick School on 01651 267410.

The role of members of staff is to inform the Child Protection Officer of any instance which suggests abuse is taking place. It is not the role of the member of staff to wait for proof, investigate or gather evidence of abuse.

Where the Child Protection Officer judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then they will contact the Social Work Department in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines.

### Disclosure of Abuse

Incidences of suspected concerns can be disclosed in a variety of ways:

- Directly by the child
- Staff observation
- By another pupil/person/agency

***The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. (Article 3: UNICEF Children's Rights and Responsibilities)***

***Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. (Article 19: UNICEF Children's Rights and Responsibilities)***



## **POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE**

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

### **Physical Indicators**

- Injuries on areas of the body that cannot be explained by typical child behaviours
- Finger/hand marks
- Bite marks
- Scalds and burns
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Poor personal hygiene
- Recurrent medical conditions, eg, head lice
- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness

### **Emotional/Behavioural Indicators**

- Sexual behaviour that is not age/stage appropriate
- Changes in behaviour – extremes of aggression or passivity
- Frozen watchfulness
- Compulsive stealing
- Hoarding of food
- Withdrawal from social contact or physical contact
- Changes to school attendance

### **Other Indicators**

- Improbable explanations for injuries
- Changes to explanation for injuries
- Disclosure from the child
- Family avoidance of professional contacts
- Failure to attend medical appointments
- Unreasonable delays in seeking medical appointments

## **Guidelines for staff dealing with a disclosure**

These guidelines have been developed to assist any member of staff that has been disclosed to.

### **Receive**

Listen to the disclosure without displaying shock or disbelief and respond calmly.

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## **Record**

Make brief notes at the times and then write them up as soon as possible. Remember to record the date, time, place and your observations of the child's non-verbal behaviour. Try to use the actual words used by the child. Please remember to sign your notes and to retain the original notes in case they are required by the courts. Complete the child protection diagram to indicate the position of any injuries.

## **React**

Reassure the child but do not make any promises that you cannot keep, for example, 'everything will be ok'. Do not promise to keep their disclosure a secret as we have a duty to refer. Do not interrogate the pupil or ask them leading questions, for example, 'then what did he/she do?' Do not criticise the perpetrator as the child may love him/her. Explain what you are going to do and who you have to talk to.

## **Report**

Report the disclosure to Michelle Strachan, the Child Protection Officer or Zoe Whyte, Head Teacher at Methlick School on 01651 267410. Complete a GIRFEC Concern (GC1) form as a record. All concerns must be recorded on the pupils Lastest Pastoral Note.

**School Child Protection Officer: Michelle Strachan**  
**If not contactable then contact Zoe Whyte 01651 267410.**

**Nursery Staff should contact Michelle Strachan (HT) or Health Visitor 01651 871530. If they are not available, then contact Duty Social Worker 01888 530831.**

## **What happens next?**

The member of staff that received a disclosure from a child is able to access counselling from Aberdeenshire Council through Employee Assistance Provider counselling service.

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