

*Getting it Right for Every Child in Aberdeenshire*

# Portlethen Primary School

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



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## Introduction

Children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations. Schools are responsible for ensuring that children are protected from maltreatment so that they grow and develop appropriately. This policy guides the school in protecting those rights to help ensure that the child is kept safe. This helps our children have the best start in life, to flourish and become:

- Responsible citizens;
- Successful learners;
- Confident Individuals;
- Effective Contributors.

All staff working in the school have a part to play in ensuring that children are safe. It is therefore essential that everyone in the school is aware of the safeguarding and child protection policy and the part they need to play to protect children.

Staff and volunteers 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 staff and pupils it may be that a child who is experiencing some form of abuse will share information in some way with them.

It is vital that all staff know what action to take should they have any concerns about a child or should they receive information which suggests that the child may be experiencing some form of abuse. The procedures outlined in this policy are designed both to safeguard the wellbeing 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.

Aberdeenshire Council have adopted the NESPC (North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee) Child Protection Guidelines. The school policy is therefore 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. Aberdeenshire have also produced an extensive set of procedures and guidelines entitled *Protecting Children and Young People in Aberdeenshire (Sept 2007)*.

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 **Sandra McKechnie, Head Teacher** who is the designated **Child Protection Coordinator**.

The policy and associated procedures will be reviewed each year. All staff working within the school will receive a regular annual briefing on the policy, its operation and any amendments to it. This will normally take place at the first in-service day in August and will form part of each new member of staff's and any volunteer's induction program.

## 2 What is Safeguarding?

**Safeguarding** is a much wider concept than child protection and refers to promoting the welfare of children. It encompasses: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcome. Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. (How good is our school? 4<sup>th</sup> edition)

### 3 What is Child Abuse and Child Neglect?

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, in the community or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

“Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission”

(Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility)

The NESCP Guidelines identify five categories of child abuse:

[NESCP Child Protection Guidelines](#)

- Physical Injury
- Sexual abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional abuse or neglect

### 4 What is Child Protection?

“All agencies, professional bodies and services that deliver adult and/or child services and work with children and their families have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement. They are expected to identify and consider the child’s needs, share information and concerns with other agencies and work collaboratively with other services (as well as the child and family) to improve outcomes for the child.”(Pg37 National Child Protection Guidelines)

### 5 Getting it Right for Every Child in Aberdeenshire

All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs are met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it as their wellbeing is paramount.

*Getting it right for every child in Aberdeenshire* is the local route by which the Scottish Government policy “Getting it right for every child” is delivered in Aberdeenshire.

It sets out a vision that we will:

- put the child (and their family) at the centre of everything we (children’s services) do.
- provide earlier intervention in order to ensure that all children achieve their potential.
- achieve the highest standards of joint working and collaboration to improve outcomes for children.
- take personal responsibility for ensuring that all children achieve their potential.
- focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Children and young people need to be **Safe, Healthy, Active, Achieving, Nurtured, Responsible, Respected and Included** (also known as **SHANARRI** or the Wellbeing Indicators) in order to achieve their potential.

If a staff member feels that a child or young person’s wellbeing is being affected then they should ask the five GIRFEC questions.

1. What is getting in the way of this child or young person’s wellbeing?
2. What can I do now to help this child or young person?
3. What additional help – if any – may be needed from others?
4. Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
5. What can my agency do to help this young child or young person?

Depending on the responses to these questions, the following actions can be taken.

- Member of staff takes appropriate action themselves
- Refer to Child Protection Coordinator/Depute Coordinators

The work on child protection that we carry out within Aberdeenshire Council and with partners is delivered to keep children **Safe**. Where we believe that a child may be at risk we will act quickly to use our child protection procedures to keep that child **Safe**. We will act to ensure that children are protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home,

## 5 Procedure for the management of Child Protection in the school

### 1. 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 **Portlethen School** is **Sandra McKechnie, Head Teacher**. In handling cases of suspected child abuse the Child Protection Coordinator works closely with staff in the school, the Council and partners such as NHS, Police Scotland and Social Work for the benefit of the child.

Any member of staff who is concerned about a possible allegation of child abuse should speak to the Child Protection Coordinator or a Depute Child Protection Coordinator:

Child Protection Coordinator	Sandra McKechnie
Depute Child Protection Coordinator	Laura Watson
Child Protection Officer	Neil Smilie +441467532985
Social Work Team: Duty Social Worker (Portlethen)	01224 666200 (Portlethen)
Children and Families Team (Portlethen)	01569 690533 (updated 23.3.18)
Children and Families Team (City)	08007315520

#### 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 at the back of this document.

### 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 Handbook. 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 NESPC and Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection Guidelines

These guidelines set out clear procedures that schools **must** follow in cases where child abuse is suspected.

The school policy interprets the NESPC 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 at the back of this document.

## 6 Advice on dealing with disclosures

Children will decide for themselves if or when they will disclose information about situations which are worrying them. It is this person's role to reassure the child and gather the information which the child chooses to share with them.

The following guidance on dealing with disclosures are provided to assist staff who may have to respond, either as part of their work role or because they have been trusted by the child.

#### Listen to what the child has to say

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Do not interrupt, if the child is swearing, for example.
- Take notes

#### Reassure

- Reassure the child but be honest and reliable
- Do not make promises you may not be able to keep, like *"I'll stay with you"*
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer.
- Provide reassurance and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example you could say: *"You're not to blame"*

#### Speaking to the child

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish full details. Do not 'interrogate' the child for full details. You are not investigating the allegation.
- Do not ask leading questions, for example: *"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?"*
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not ask the child 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 later.
- 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
- Do not take photographs or video any injuries or bruises. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising
- Record statements and what you observe, rather than your interpretation or assumptions.

## **School Procedures**

- Follow the school guidelines.
- Quickly contact the school Child Protection Coordinator or a Depute Coordinator if they are unavailable.
- Ensure you have briefed the Child Protection Coordinator or a senior member of staff.

## **Relax**

Get some support for yourself if you need it.

Where a member of staff or a person working in the school sees, hears or is advised of a child protection allegation, this person should quickly make the Child Protection Coordinator aware of the allegation or the details of the incident.

## **7 Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Checks**

The PVG scheme is a Scottish Government scheme. It helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children through paid or unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. The school follows Aberdeenshire Council's policy on the application of the scheme.

Staff and volunteers who work with children will need to be members of the PVG scheme.

## **8 Child Protection Training**

Aberdeenshire Council makes child protection training available for people working in the school.

The awareness of all staff working in the school on child protection issues will be refreshed on an annual basis at the start of each new school session in August by the Child Protection Coordinator.

Staff working with children should complete a training session on Basic Child Protection on a two yearly basis.

More specialist training is available to staff to help them fulfil particular roles. Staff fulfilling those roles should identify the child protection training they require and arrange with the Child Protection Coordinator to receive that training.

Training may be provided by a number of routes for example by attending a course, by receiving briefing or by making use of e-learning.