

HIGHLAND SCHOOLS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

SCHOOL / ACADEMY

All children have a right not to be abused and to be protected from abuse and neglect, therefore child protection is the responsibility of everyone. 'It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright' (*Scottish Executive, Nov 2002*) underlines the need for us **all** to take responsibility in order to protect children.

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

In order to achieve this we will:

- Seek to work in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies and Highland Council to promote good practice in the area of child protection.
- Update any changes in child protection policy and practice under the guidance from the designated person in the school
- Endeavour to ensure that all staff have access to appropriate child protection training, supervision and support in order to implement this policy effectively and with the minimum of stress.

The detailed arrangements, systems and procedures for ensuring that the above policy statements are fully implemented are contained in the Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines published by the Child Protection Committee.

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

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

When a child tells an adult about possible abuse, his or her statements should not be dismissed or ignored. The adult should attend carefully to what the child wants to communicate, taking account of the child's age and stage of development, and allow the child to say what he or she wants to say without being drawn into detailed questioning.

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

In our school the designated person is:

In their absence their deputy is:

COPIES OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY GUIDELINES are available from the designated person or online at www.highland.gov.uk

REMEMBER:

Any concerns about the well-being of a child need to be shared.

No matter how good we are at evaluating and assessing matters to do with children in our classes, when it comes to the child's welfare we **cannot** evaluate and assess potential danger, risk, damage, as we only know a tiny part of the whole picture. We **must** share our concerns with the designated person.

Child Protection Procedure checklist for our staff.

If

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

The member of staff **must: RECORD and REPORT**

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

Then **REPORT** to the designated person without delay.

Members of staff **must not**

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

Further information can be found in 'Working Together to Protect Children in the Highlands' Highland Child Protection Committee's inter-agency guidelines as follows:

Definitions of abuse	page 4 – 6, 51 – 53
Recording and record keeping	page 10
Education procedures	page 24 - 26
Useful contacts	page 55
Education Referral	page 56