

## Child Protection Policy

At DÓXA THEÓ CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, we aim to provide a safe, positive environment in which each pupil can fulfil their potential. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “children and young people should be protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community”. Therefore, everybody has a responsibility for the safety of children and young people. As a Christian school, we take this very seriously as protecting God’s creatures. All staff, both paid and volunteers must have a current PVG certificate.

### The Context

Every child or young person has the right to be safe and protected, and to feel safe and protected from any avoidable situation or acts which might result in that child:

- Being physically, sexually or emotionally harmed in any way.
- Put at risk of physical, sexual or emotional harm, abuse or exploitation.
- Having their basic needs neglected or experiencing that their needs are met in ways that are not appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Being denied the sustained support and care necessary for them to thrive and develop normally.
- Being denied access to appropriate medical treatment.
- Being exposed to demands and expectations which are inappropriate for their age and stage of development.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2021

### About the Guidelines

These guidelines, set out in a series of three booklets, apply to all Education staff. They also apply to all other employees, volunteers and others working with children and young people in educational establishments. This guidance will be updated as required to take account of changes in legislation and practice.

These guidelines will assist all employees who work with children, young people and families by:

(a) Developing an ethos which safeguards and promotes the welfare and well-being of all children.

(b) Providing clear guidance for all staff on the roles and responsibilities involved in child protection.

(c) Ensuring that staff respond appropriately when abuse is identified.

(d) Describing the processes and procedures that all staff must follow in response to disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse.

(e) Ensuring effective interagency communication, collaborative working and providing a consistent framework for practice.

### **Child Protection Measures**

Formal child protection measures can be broadly divided into several different stages:

(a) Recognising actual or potential harm to a child.

(b) Sharing concerns and initial information-gathering.

(c) Joint investigation/assessment.

(d) Medical examination and assessment.

(e) Child Protection Case Conferences.

(f) Developing a Child Protection Plan.

Education staff have a key role to play in recognizing actual or potential harm to a child and in sharing concerns and initial information gathering. Social Workers and/or Police staff lead joint investigations, assessments, case conferences and planning. As the investigating services, Social Work in conjunction with the Police, will determine the extent to which any risk to a child requires immediate action.

### **Recognising Actual or Potential Harm to a Child or Young Person**

Concerns about actual or potential harm to a child or young person may arise over some time or in response to a particular incident. Concerns may arise from direct observation, reports from the child or a third party, or anonymously raised concerns.

A child who has been abused and/or neglected may show obvious physical signs of injury or maltreatment. However, an assessment of whether a child is experiencing, or likely to experience, harm should also look closely at the child's behaviour and development. Some common behaviours which may indicate a cause for concern are detailed in the appendix section of this document.

Staff working with children need to be mindful of the four primary categories of child abuse ie Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect but also need to be mindful of the complexity of the risks facing some young people. These risks could manifest themselves as a form of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), a risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), or a risk of radicalization (PREVENT). We need to be alert to the diverse range of risks some children and young people face.

### **Significant Harm and the Nature of Risk**

Significant harm and the nature of risk are defined in Book 2 of Protecting Children and Young People in Education. Harm means the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Significant harm is determined by comparing the health or development of a child to what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.

Risk is part of everyday life. From a child protection perspective, it is the risk of significant harm that is central. There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm; sometimes, it can be a single traumatic event, such as a violent assault or poisoning; often, it is a combination of significant events which can interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. The challenge for practitioners is identifying which children require protective measures. Where concerns are raised about the potential significant harm to a child, they must be considered child protection concerns. Failure to properly identify risk can lead to serious, and even fatal, outcomes for children.

### **Key Questions When the Safety of a Child is Raised**

When considering the immediate needs of a child or young person once a concern about their possible safety is raised, practitioners must consider the following questions:

- (a) Is this child at immediate risk?
  
- (b) What is placing this child at immediate risk?
  
- (c) What needs to happen to remove this risk now?

When a Child Protection Coordinator decides to contact Social Work services and/or the Police with a child protection concern, this should be progressed without delay.

Contact may be made by phone or in person, and broadly the possible outcomes of the contact will be:

- That the child is considered to be at risk of immediate or significant harm.

or

- That the child is considered to be a "child in need".

or

- That no further action is identified as being required.

Regardless of the outcome, the discussion must be entered into the child's chronology by the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

### **Responding to Concerns About Children and Young People**

All notifications of concerns about children or young people should be taken seriously. Staff responsible for responding to these concerns should be aware that even apparently low-level concerns may point to more serious and significant harm. When a Child Protection referral is made to Social Work or the Police they will check to determine whether or not they already know the child/family. Initial Referral Discussions (IRD) with relevant other agencies will be made to help inform an initial assessment of risk. In most cases, the child, parent or any other person will not be contacted at this stage.

Allegations of child abuse are investigated by Social Workers and Police officers who will also liaise with their Education and Children's Services and Health colleagues, where appropriate. The information gathered from the initial enquiries will be used to review the initial assessment of risk and to determine what further action, if any should be taken.

Where concerns related to child protection arise, the Child Protection Procedure in Education must be followed. Any immediate risk should be considered by Child Protection Co-ordinators and actioned as a matter of urgency. Where a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought without delay from the relevant health services.

## **Responding to Concerns About Children and Young People**

### **All staff**

If any member of staff has a concern relating to a child or young person at risk from any form of abuse, the procedure in outline below, and detailed in the Child Protection Procedure in Education Flow Chart shown above, must be followed. Members of staff must:

- (a) Remember that the role of the educational establishment or other services is to observe, record and report. Do not investigate.
- (b) Discuss your concerns immediately with the Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) for your establishment or if he or she is unavailable the Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator. If neither are available speak to any senior member of staff.
- (c) Ensure that the information you have is accurately recorded using form GC1.
- (d) Be aware that the CPC will consider this information and may gather further information, dependent upon the situation.
- (e) Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- (f) If the incident occurs out of hours, or it is not possible to speak to the CPC or Depute, then you mustn't wait. Immediately, contact the Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service - 0800 731 5520 (Emergency Out of Hours)

### **Child Protection Coordinator (CPC)**

Child Protection Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that appropriate action is taken in response to concerns being reported. Child Protection Coordinators must follow the Child Protection Procedure. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will be supported and overseen by the Safeguarding Oversight Committee.

(a) The CPC will gather further information from appropriate sources as a matter of urgency.

(b) The CPC will make an assessment and determine whether or not the child needs protection without delay.

(c) If an immediate risk exists the CPC will contact Social Work to share concerns. CPCs will ensure that any information is accurately recorded on the appropriate form (GC1) with reasons for the decision reached.

(d) The CPC will share information that is relevant, necessary, legitimate, appropriate and proportionate with others, including the Head Teacher (if applicable), Line Manager, and the Board.

(e) The CPC will cooperate fully where additional information or clarification is needed by Social Work or the Police.

(f) When feedback is available, the CPC must ensure this is recorded on RR1 and the appropriate chronology.

(g) If the concern relates to a child within an Early Years Setting, the Care Inspectorate must be informed.

### **Recording Decisions and Actions**

When the CPC has decided to contact Social Work and /or the Police with a child protection concern this should be progressed without delay. Contact may be by phone or in person. Social Workers or the Police will determine:

(a) That the child is considered to be at risk of immediate or significant harm.

(b) That the child is considered to be a "child in need".

(c) That no further action is identified as being required.

Regardless of the outcome, the fact of the discussion must be entered into the child's chronology by the CPC.

### **Recording where a child is considered to be at risk of imminent or significant harm**

(a) If the discussion above concludes that a child may be at risk of significant harm the Social Work Service will advise the CPC of the next steps.

(b) Under these circumstances it is probable that Social Work or the Police will contact the establishment for additional information/ clarification. The Child Protection Coordinator will record that the conversation took place and the essence of it using RR1 and open an Education Child Protection File.

(c) When the outcome of the concern is feedback to the establishment the Child Protection Coordinator should record this in the Education Child Protection File.

### **Recording where the child is considered to be a “child in need”**

If the outcome of the discussion with Social Work or the Police is that the child should be considered to be “in need”, this should be recorded by the Child Protection Coordinator in the child’s chronology together with agreed actions in response to the child’s needs.

Additional recording where it is considered that no further action is required.

(a) If the outcome of the initial consultation with Social Work or the Police is that no further action is required this should be recorded in the child’s chronology by the CPC.

(b) The Child Protection Coordinator will ensure that this is filed in the restricted access area of the Pupil Progress Report (PPR) or Child Protection Education File if already open.

### **Informing Parents and Carers**

The most important aspect of child protection procedures is keeping children and young people safe from harm. When, how and by whom parents and carers are informed should always be discussed with Social Work or Police Scotland colleagues as part of the referral process. CPC should not inform parents or carers before this discussion.

### **Case Conferences**

If a child or young person is believed to have been exposed to significant harm or to be at risk of significant harm a meeting of professionals may take place to decide whether or not the child’s name should be placed on the Child Protection Register.

A Case Conference is a non-statutory multi-agency meeting organised by the social work service. It is central to child protection procedures. Its function is to:

(a) Bring together all the information from people who work with the child.

(b) Use this information to analyse and assess the extent to which the child is at risk of abuse.

(c) Agree what measures need to be taken by various agencies to protect the child or promote their welfare.

(d) Place the child on the Child Protection register and if it is considered necessary put a Child Protection Plan in place.

(e) Appoint a Key Worker and identify a Core Group to implement the plan.

Participants, who are asked to provide a written report at least two days ahead of the conference, are required to speak to their report. Those who attend the Case Conference will be asked for their professional opinion as to whether the child's name should be entered in the Child Protection Register. If the child is placed on the Child Protection Register a review meeting will be arranged for a later date; the Core Group will be expected to meet before the review to ensure the progress of the plan.

### **Child Protection Register**

The Child Protection Register is a confidential database of children deemed to be at risk of child abuse.

The Register can be accessed by Police and Social Work. Every ECS establishment should know which children are on the Child Protection register and have measures in place to provide additional support if required. Placing a name on the Register does not itself protect the child. Protection comes from the multi-agency Child Protection Plan.

### **Allegations Against a Member of Staff or Other Known Adult**

On occasion, Child Protection concerns may be identified or raised about someone working in the school.

Throughout, the first and paramount consideration must always be the safety of children and young people. However, to separate responsibilities for the child from responsibilities for the staff member about whom concern has been expressed, different individuals from within the establishment should be tasked with the responsibility of taking forward each respective area. In addition, the Board will assume the overall responsibility for ensuring that the response of the school is coordinated and effective.

In all cases, the following advice must be followed:

(a) Any member of staff who is concerned or receives concerns about the conduct of other staff towards a child must immediately report this to the establishment's Child Protection Co-ordinator.

(b) The Child Protection Co-ordinator is responsible for immediately reporting the concern to the Line Manager who will immediately inform the Board.

(c) The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is to ensure that standard child protection processes are followed.

(d) The role of the Board is to ensure that appropriate processes about staff conduct are followed and to ensure that quality personal support is available to those concerned.

(e) Police and Social Work will be involved as appropriate.

(f) A decision will be made by the Board regarding whether or not to remove the member of staff temporarily without prejudice to the outcome.

## **Categories Of Abuse**

For the Child Protection Register, child abuse can be divided into 4 categories of abuse: physical neglect/abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and non-organic failure to thrive.

### **Physical Neglect/Abuse**

This occurs when the needs of the child are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care could result in circumstances that cause danger for the child. Neglect may also occur when the child is left unattended, inadequately supervised or deprived of access to suitable health care.

### **Physical Injury**

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented:

- All children where there is a physical injury
- Where it is known, admitted or reasonably suspected that the injury was inflicted by a person caring for the child or any person likely to be a member of the same household
- Anyone caring for the child knowingly failed or prevented the injury or acted without due regard for the safety of the child

### **Signs of possible physical abuse**



- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them e.g. a fall causing two black eyes rather than one.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places where they are not normally expected to appear following everyday rough and tumble
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Instances where children are kept away from school inappropriately or unusual attendance patterns
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in PE or swimming
- Any signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illnesses or abrasions or inadequate care
- Unexplained bruising or bruising in unusual places
- Appearing constantly tired, hungry, untidy or smelly

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe or persistent adverse effects on the emotional development of a child. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, inadequate or valued only in so far as to meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age- or developmentally- inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children.

Emotional abuse can take the form of:

- Rejecting
- Isolating
- Terrorizing
- Ignoring
- Corrupting negative/derogatory remarks
- Bullying

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Appearing afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Nervous or watchful
- Sudden underachieving or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers or adults
- Persistent tiredness
- Afraid to go home
- Being left unattended or unsupervised

## **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may involve children looking at, or being involved in the production of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate activities. Activities involving sexual exploitation, particularly between young people, may be indicated by the lack of consent, inequalities in power and balance; or actual threatened coercion or grooming.

### Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse (children rarely lie about such matters)
- Child with an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or detailed knowledge inappropriate to his/her age
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Extreme shyness/boldness about changing, for swimming or PE, in front of peers or adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances – unexplained prolonged tiredness
- Behaviour indicative of role reversal in the home – whether or not the mother lives there

## **Neglect**

Children who fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development) where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

### **How do I respond when I have a concern about a Child?**

All individuals working with children have a duty and responsibility to share any suspicions of a child protection nature, which come to their attention. Everyone will come across situations when they suspect abuse but are uncertain how to act.

Follow these basic principles:

- Protection and welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions
- All people concerned should be aware that clear record-keeping and information sharing between agencies is of crucial importance
- A planned approach should be adopted in addressing concerns about children except where they need immediate medical attention, or where a child may be at immediate risk of harm
- Your job is to record the child's words, not to investigate

### **How to react if a child wants to disclose information?**

- Remain calm,
- Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing by telling someone,
- Listen and accept what the child says seriously,
- Let the child know you will need to tell someone,
- Don't push for information, ask leading questions, or make suggestions,
- Give the child time to say what they want to say, reassure, attach no blame,
- As soon as possible record in detail, using the language used by the child, the information,
- Try not to show any revulsion at what is said no matter how distasteful the information,
- Your job is to record the child's words, not to investigate.

### Helpful things to say

- "I am glad you told me"
- "I am listening"

We aim to ensure that each child is active, nurtured in Biblical principles, safe, responsible, respected, achieving and healthy.

The safety and well-being of every child is paramount and therefore management of suspected abuse must put children first. We believe that children should get help when they need it.

## **The Role of the Child Protection Coordinator**

- To discuss concerns about children
- To process and retain referral documentation and inform the Board
- To discuss referrals made with the Social Work Department, Health Professionals and any other outside agency
- To participate in the decision-making process concerning the referrals
- To monitor the attendance of children in school who are on the Child Protection Register
- To ensure that records are sent to receiving schools when children change schools
- To maintain accurate Child Protection Records and ensure they are kept in a secure place
- To ensure staff members receive regular Child Protection training
- To ensure that staff members are regularly reminded and updated as to Child Protection procedures
- To ensure that the Child Protection Policy is reviewed regularly and disseminated to all staff/volunteers

### **Action Guidelines for reporting possible abuse:**

Concerns about harm to a child should be reported without delay to social work or in situations where risk is immediate, to Police Scotland.

- Name role/contact details of the person reporting a concern
- Name of the child, age, date of birth and home address if possible
- Name/address/phone of parents/carers or guardians
- Culture/language/understanding: any considerations in communication?
- Name of child's school, nursery/ early learning centre or childcare
- Is it known if the child is on the Child Protection register?

Immediate needs and concerns:

- What is the nature of the child protection concern?
- Where is the child now? How is he/she now?
- Physically: does he/she have any known injuries or immediate health needs and does he/she require medical treatment?

- Emotionally: how is he/she right now and what does she/he need immediately for reassurance/understanding?
- Communication and understanding: is he/she able to communicate without interpreting/without additional communication support?
- Is the child safe now? If not, in your view, is there action that might be taken to make them safe?

### **Responding to a Disclosure and Guidance on Making Notes**

The following points should be noted when responding to any disclosure.

(a) Stay calm.

(b) Do not promise to keep secrets.

(c) Tell the child or young person that you might have to let someone else know, but you will tell them who it is and what you are going to say.

(d) Listen to the child or young person and let them know you take what they say seriously.

(e) Give the child or young person time to say what they want to say.

(f) Try not to show alarm no matter how difficult the information.

(g) Do not ask any leading questions or suggest who might be responsible, no matter that clues may be contained in the information.

(h) Reassure the child or young person that they are doing the right thing by telling someone.

(i) Tell the child what action you are going to take.

(j) Do not ask the child to repeat their disclosure to another person.

(k) Remember that you too may need support as listening to an abused child is difficult.

(l) As soon as practicable, using the language used by the child or young person, make a handwritten note using form RR1 in detail of the information shared with you. Record the date and time of the disclosure and sign the note. Share your information with the Child Protection Coordinator immediately.

### **Guidance on Making Notes**

(a) Notes should be made carefully, accurately and factually and as soon as practicable after the event. Hand-written notes are acceptable.

(b) All notes must be signed and dated, with the name and post held printed clearly.

(c) Opinion should be restricted to the demeanour of the child. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and/or sketched.

(d) At no time should photographic records be taken.

(e) Any relevant comment by the child or by an adult who might be the abuser, should be recorded, preferably quoting the words used.

(f) The personal opinions of members of staff must not be included.

## **Record of concerns**

- When did these concerns first come to light? What happened? (For example because of an injury? through what this or another child has said? because of how a child appears? or due to e.g. parental behaviour?)
- Is it believed person(s) may be responsible for harm to a child?
- If so, is/are their name/address/occupation/relationship to the child known?
- Are you aware if this person has/these persons have access to other children? (Name, age and address details of such children if available?)
- If the concern was raised by this child then who has spoken to him/her?
- Is the person who has spoken to the child available to be spoken with?
- What has the child said to this point? (Please note and share)
- What he/she has been asked, when and by whom? (Please note and share)
- If concerns were not reported when they first arose, was there a reason for this and what has prompted reporting now?

### **Advice for Supporting the Child**

- The following points should be discussed with the Police and a Social Worker if a child or young person is to be interviewed within Education and Children's Services premises:
  - (a) Whether the Child Protection coordinator has a role in the interview.
  - (b) How the child or young person should be informed by the Police/Social Work about what may be done to keep them safe.
  - (c) The team/establishment will provide a supportive role before and after the process.
- NB: It is the role of the Police and Social Work to decide whether or not to involve the parents or carers at this stage.
- The Police and Social Workers may decide that a Joint Interview will be carried out with the child. This is a particular interview carried out by specially trained Police Officers and a specially trained Social Worker. Police and Social Workers will arrange for this to take place.
- A Joint Interview needs to be video recorded to keep a record of the interview. This requires special equipment and as such the interview may need to take

place at locations which have this equipment. Where appropriate, the decision might be made to make use of portable equipment.

### **Advice for Feeding Back to Referrer**

Raising concerns about child protection may be difficult for those involved. Anyone in that position must receive reassurance that their concerns have been taken seriously, and appropriate action taken. However, it is crucial to ensure that confidentiality is always upheld.

As soon as possible after the submission of form RR1, the CPC should contact the person who raised the concern to thank them for their actions and explain that all cases are processed in line with established policy. The referrer should be advised that policy has been followed and that, for reasons of confidentiality, no details can be shared.

### **Record Keeping and Report Writing**

Careful maintenance of Child Protection Records is vital. Information gathered may be required for a Child Protection Conference or, less frequently, for legal proceedings. The following advice must be strictly applied. Staff must not alter the wording or format of any forms provided for use.

It is vital that procedures are followed precisely and information and events are recorded accurately, factually and in detail. Information gathered may be required for a Child Protection case conference or, less frequently, for court action. It should be noted that the content of reports may be required to be made known to the families concerned and therefore reports must be factual. The following advice must be strictly applied:

- (a) Records and reports should be kept in a Child Protection Education File and stored securely.
- (b) All Child Protection Education File should be stored alongside PPRs.
- (c) CPCs must ensure they comply with service arrangements to ensure Child Protection Education Files are accessible during holiday periods.
- (d) A record should be kept of when records are consulted and by whom.
- (e) Establishments should have a system for alerting staff dealing with a Child Protection issue to the existence of existing confidential material, should the Child Protection coordinator be unavailable
- (f) All Child Protection information must be retained in the Child Protection File whether or not the child's name is currently entered in the Register.
- (g) Current or previous Child Protection concerns must be highlighted to any receiving school at the point of transfer. Material relating to Child Protection should never be removed.

All Staff are members of the PVG Scheme and have received Child Protection Training recently. This training links to this policy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

Child Protection Coordinator: Jehian Tiley

Depute Child Protection Coordinator: Svea Nöll

Safeguarding Oversight Committee: John Noble, Tom Davenport  
(Board Chair and Secretary)

### Child Protection Contact Numbers

01224 306877 (Aberdeen Joint Child Protection Team)

0800 731 5520 (Emergency Out of Hours)

101 (Police Scotland)

Important links:

[Child Protection and Safeguarding | Policies and information | About Education Scotland | Education Scotland](#)

[Registration of independent schools: guidance for proprietors overseeing child protection and safeguarding arrangements - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[UN Convention on Rights of a Child \(UNCRC\) - UNICEF UK](#)

[Supporting documents - National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Written: September 2024