

Article 19 : Governements must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and mistreatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.



Clydebank High School
POLICIES & PROCEDURES
PP3.7: Child Protection Policy



WDC Policies & Procedures:	PP5.16: Child Protection Policy
National Priorities:	NP4
How Good Is Our School?	5.8: Care, welfare and development
SMT Responsible:	Stewart Young (HT)
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CLYDEBANK HIGH SCHOOL
YOUNG PERSON PROTECTION
CORE GUIDELINES FOR ALL STAFF

Section 1:

Overview

- 1 Immediately report any grounds for concern to the Head Teacher. In the event of the Head Teacher's absence, staff should report to the appropriate DHT, Mrs Grumball.

If you have direct evidence or suspicion of child abuse then the only way you can protect the young person/people is to report the matter immediately. You must ensure that your ongoing involvement is in each young person's best interests: you must not wait to gather evidence, nor agree to keep the information secret, nor discuss the matter with others.

- 2 Follow the guidance given by the Head Teacher in relation to recording your concerns, supporting the young person and co-operating with subsequent actions to investigate the grounds of concern and to protect the young person or young people concerned.

The difference between Child Protection and Child Abuse could be YOU!

Section 2:

Grounds for Concern

- All staff must report immediately to the Head Teacher if there are grounds for concern about the possibility of abuse.
- Grounds for concern can arise from a wide range of circumstances and will generally be covered by the following circumstances:
 - o A young person states that abuse has taken place or that the young person feels unsafe.
 - o A third party or anonymous allegation is received.
 - o A young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statement(s) causes suspicion of abuse.

Welfare Principle

- All action should be taken in the best interest of the young person or young people. Good practice which protects young people requires the careful exercise of professional judgement and skill.
- Actions to protect a young person, including following child protection procedures, should as far as possible avoid causing any young person undue distress or adding unnecessarily to any harm that a young person has already suffered

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Proof is NOT Required

- It is not necessary or indeed safe for a young person that a member of staff waits for proof or actively gathers evidence of abuse before reporting concerns. If the member of staff suspects from the information available that there is the possibility of abuse then immediate action to report this to the Head Teacher should be taken.
- In everyday circumstances staff do question young people about injuries, behaviour, statements or emotional responses in order to help the young person. Staff should continue to do this, but such questioning must stop and immediate action to report to the Head Teacher must be taken once the staff member suspects the possibility of abuse.
- Staff should always make sure they use open ended questions when questioning young people about any matter. Open ended questions encourage young people to provide information in the order they wish to give it, with the detail they wish to provide and using their own words to describe their experiences. Direct or closed questions which put suggestions to the young person should not be used when questioning young people about welfare concerns. This is most important because inappropriate or intrusive questioning is not in the young person's best interests and could contaminate a subsequent social work investigation.
- If there is a need for discussion with a third party who has raised concerns about a young person, it is important for evidential purposes and for meeting the young person's emotional needs that such discussion is not carried out within the young person's hearing.

Secrets Should NOT be Kept

- At any time during discussion with a young person (or a third party), staff should not agree to keep secret any information which implies that a young person might have been subject to abuse or is at risk of future abuse.
- It should be explained to the pupil that while every effort will be made to keep information confidential, if there is cause for concern about their welfare, it will be necessary to pass on the relevant information, initially, to the Head Teacher.
- It should also be explained that the information will be treated with extreme sensitivity and will only be conveyed to those professionals who are in a position to protect and support the young person.
- In discussion with a young person, he or she should be reassured that they will be kept informed of what is happening and will be supported by staff as appropriate. Any information subsequently shared with the young person should be appropriate to the young person's age and stage of development and should not breach the confidentiality of any other parties involved.
- If a third party is involved, he or she should be informed on a "need to know" basis that the matter is now being dealt with according to the appropriate procedures. As confidentiality must not be breached there is no need to specify which procedures. The third party can be supported by staff as appropriate.
- As appropriate, the member of staff to whom the information has been given, should try to seek the permission of the young person or third party to pass on the information to the Head

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Teacher. However, in the interest of the young person's safety and well-being, staff must go ahead and report their concerns to the Head Teacher immediately, with or without consent. In reality, explaining matters in a caring and sensitive way will normally secure cooperation.

- If the young person (or third party) decides to withdraw from speaking to the member of staff they should be told that they can have further discussion with any member of staff in the future. They should be told that the Head Teacher will be advised that they appear to have some concerns. As appropriate they should be given guidance on sources of support outwith the establishment. The member of staff should then discuss the matter with the Head Teacher.
- Staff should be open and honest in explaining the action they plan to take. Their approach at this stage is crucial in promoting the immediate well-being of the young person and in enabling future support plans.

Reporting Grounds for Concern

- A member of staff must report grounds for concern about the possibility of abuse to the Head Teacher immediately with or without the consent of the young person or young people concerned.
- The member of staff should not consult with, nor share the information with anyone else other than the Head Teacher.
- On no account should staff tell a parent about what has happened at this stage. Involvement of parents will be determined on the advice of the social work department.
- On trips or residential breaks, staff should follow the procedures as set out in these guidelines and contact the Head Teacher.
- Staff taking young people on trips abroad should make immediate contact with the Head Teacher or a designated senior member of staff, who will co-ordinate any necessary referral procedures. If contact cannot be made with an appropriate senior manager, then the appropriate member of the Directorate Management Team should be contacted.

Exceptional Circumstances

- On the rare occasions when a member of staff is not satisfied with the Head Teacher's decision in response to the ground for concern, the member of staff should attempt further discussion with the Head Teacher. If the member of staff is still dissatisfied after further discussion and continues to have concerns about the possibility of abuse, the member of staff can act as a member of the public and refer the matter to the police, the Children's Reporter or the social work department. It is advised that this action is undertaken only in extreme cases and the member of staff should inform the Head Teacher of their action.
- If the member of staff suspects that the Head Teacher has been involved in child abuse then this must be reported immediately to the Director of Education and Cultural Services or the appropriate depute.

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Recording Concerns

- The member of staff must record what has occurred as soon as possible on the same day. The Head Teacher will request this and provide guidance as necessary. The record should be dated and signed and should be kept in the confidential Incident File. It may be required as part of the child protection process or as evidence for future criminal prosecution.

Supporting the Young Person

- All employees have a responsibility to support a young person as appropriate within an establishment or service throughout the child protection process. This will normally be in co-operation with other relevant personnel.

Co-operating

- Following reporting and recording of concerns, staff should co-operate fully with subsequent inquiries, investigations and support plans as directed by the head of establishment and in consultation with appropriate agency representatives. Co-operation could include attendance at case discussions, young person protection conferences and reviews if agreed by the head of establishment.

If you have any questions or wish to know more, contact the Head Teacher.