



Aberdeenshire  
COUNCIL



# Redmyre Primary School

Redmyre  
School

## Child Protection Policy

In accordance with

Rights Respecting Schools

Articles: 3, 12, 18, 19, 28, 29 & 31

Reviewed June 2018

**Article 3 – (best interests of the child)**

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

**Article 12 – (respect the views of the child)**

Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

**Article 18 – (parental responsibilities; state assistance)**

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must help parents by providing services to support them, especially if the child's parents work.

**Article 19 – (protection from all forms of violence)**

Governments 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.

**Article 28 – (right to education)**

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's human dignity. Wealthy countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29 – (goals of education)**

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

**Article 31 – (leisure, play and culture)**

Every child has the right to relax, play and join in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

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# The Context

## 1. The Context

Every child or young person has the right to be 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 to their age and stage of development.

*Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*

## 2. About the Guidelines

These guidelines, set out in a series of three booklets, apply to all of Education employees. 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.

Child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families regardless of whether or not they come into direct contact with children. All workers must be fully informed of their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe. All services working with children, young people and families are expected to identify and consider the wellbeing of children and to share concerns appropriately.

These guidelines are based on [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014](#). The National Guidance provides a framework within which agencies and practitioners can understand and agree processes for working together to support, promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all children.

Child Protection is part of our approach to Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Curriculum for Excellence. Every child and young person has the right to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. They have the right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account. They should expect to get the help they need, when they need it and be able to access help close to where they live.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help protect the children and young people of Aberdeenshire and to build the confidence of staff to work safely with children and to take

responsibility for protecting them.

### **3. Aims**

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

- Developing an ethos which safeguards and promotes the welfare and wellbeing of all children.
- Providing clear guidance for all staff on the roles and responsibilities involved in child protection.
- Ensuring that staff respond appropriately when abuse is identified.
- Describing the processes and procedures that all staff must follow in response to disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse.
- Ensuring effective multi-agency communication, collaborative working and providing a consistent framework for practice.

### **4. Who is a Child?**

Section 2.1 of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 provides an explanation of the legal contexts in which a young person up to the age 18 may be considered as a child. These guidelines apply to children and young people up to the age of 18 who attend school or are eligible to access services. Throughout these guidelines child references to a child or children apply equally to young people.

### **5. Who are Parents and Carers?**

A parent is defined as someone who is the genetic or adoptive mother or father of a child. A child may also have a parent by virtue of provisions in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008.

A mother has full parental rights and responsibilities. A father has parental rights and responsibilities if he is or was married to the mother at the time of the child's conception or subsequently. A father also has parental rights and responsibilities if the child birth was registered after 4 May 2006 and he has been registered as the father of the child on the birth certificate. A parent may also have acquired rights where a Parental Responsibilities and Parental Rights Agreement exists under section 4(1) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

A carer is someone other than a parent who has rights and responsibilities for looking after a child or young person. A kinship carer can be a person who is related to the child or a person who is known to the child and with whom the child has a pre-existing relationship.

### **6. What is Child Protection?**

Child protection means protecting a child or young person from abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Where a child requires protection, a Child Protection Plan is used to detail how a child will be kept safe. Everyone is responsible for Child Protection.

There are circumstances where, although abuse has taken place, formal child protection procedures are not required. For example, the child's family may take protective action by removing the child from the source of risk. Children who are abused by strangers would not necessarily require a Child Protection Plan unless abuse occurred in circumstances resulting from a failure in familial responsibility.

## **7. What is Child Abuse and Child Neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, a significant harm to a child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

There are four primary categories of child abuse: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing a child to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting a child. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child or young person in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child 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 include non-contact activities, such as involving a child in looking at or in the production of indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering

from non-organic failure to thrive, where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form a child can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to damaging long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

## 8. What is Harm and Significant Harm in a Child Protection Context?

Child protection is closely linked to the risk of significant harm. Significant harm is a complex matter and subject to professional judgement based on a multi-agency assessment of the circumstances of the child or young person and their family. Where there are concerns about harm, abuse or neglect, these must be shared with the relevant agencies so that they can decide together whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant.

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the suspected or reported abusive behaviour.

In order to understand the concept of significant harm, it is helpful to look at the relevant definitions.

- *Harm* - the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child or young person, including, for example, impairment suffered as a result of seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In this context, development can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development and health can mean physical or mental health.
- *Significant Harm* - Whether the harm suffered, or likely to be suffered, by a child or young person is significant is determined by comparing the child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a typical child.

There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm. In assessing the severity of ill treatment or future ill treatment, it may be important to take account of the degree and extent of physical harm; the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect; the extent of premeditation; and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, for example, a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm results from an accumulation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, that interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

It should be remembered that the threshold for referral to the Children's Reporter is not the significant harm threshold, but when it is considered that a child is in the need of protection, guidance, treatment or control and Compulsory Measures of Supervision might be necessary.

## 9. What is Risk in a Child Protection Context?

In the context of these guidelines, risk is the likelihood or probability of a particular outcome given the presence of factors in a child or young person's life. Risk is part and parcel of



everyday life; a toddler learning to walk is likely to be at risk from some stumbles and scrapes but this does not mean the child should not be encouraged to walk. Risks may be deemed acceptable and they may also be reduced by parents/carers or through the early intervention of universal services. Only where risks cause, or are likely to cause, significant harm to a child, would a response under child protection be required. Where a child has already been exposed to actual harm, assessment will mean looking at the extent to which they are at risk of repeated harm and at the potential effects of continued exposure over time. Consideration should also be given to the risk posed by the potential perpetrator.

## **10. Information Sharing and Child Protection**

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children. Although those providing services to children or young people may be concerned about balancing their duty to protect children from harm and their general duty towards service users, the overriding concern must always be the safety of the child. Concerns about a child's safety will always take precedence over any public interest in maintaining confidentiality.

It should be borne in mind that a fairly minor wellbeing concern raised by one agency may, when combined with information from other agencies, point to much more serious concerns. Under present Data Protection law it is perfectly acceptable and lawful for services to share information where there is an indication that a child's wellbeing is at risk. Under such circumstances consent is not required and should not be sought as the holder of the information can rely on alternative and more appropriate conditions from schedules 2 and 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998. This has been reaffirmed through the publication of advice by the Information Commissioner.

In relation to child protection procedures and confidentiality, the main points to remember are:

- In the interests of protecting children, employees have a professional obligation to pass on information to relevant agencies.
- Employees must not promise to keep secret any allegation or concerns even if a child or third person requests this. There is no guarantee that the source of a concern can be kept confidential.

Aberdeenshire Council has worked with Aberdeen City Council, Moray Council, NHS Grampian and Police Scotland to produce a practitioner's guide, [A Practitioners Guide to information sharing and confidentiality](#), which can be found at the GIRFEC-Aberdeenshire website [www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org](http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org).

## **11. Multi-Agency Working**

GIRFEC requires that all services for children and young people and adult services working with parents and carers of children and young people adapt and streamline their systems and practices so that, where necessary, they can work together better to support children and young people. With its emphasis on shared assessment based on common language, it facilitates information-sharing and stresses the importance of understanding risks and needs across all aspects of the child's wellbeing.

## **12. Contact Details in Aberdeenshire**

All staff must be aware of what to do if they have a concern about the safety of a child.

They must also ensure they know who the Child Protection Officer or Depute Child Protection Officer is for each establishment they work in.

Social Work can be contacted by calling a local Social Work Office as listed below:

<u>Social Work Office</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
<u>Aboyne</u>	<u>013398 87096</u>
<u>Banchory</u>	<u>01330 824991</u>
<u>Banff</u>	<u>01261 812001 or 01261 813180</u>
<u>Ellon</u>	<u>01358 720033</u>
<u>Fraserburgh</u>	<u>01346 513281</u>
<u>Huntly</u>	<u>01466 799600</u>
<u>Inverurie</u>	<u>01467 625555 or 01467 537555</u>
<u>Kemnay</u>	<u>01467532888</u>
<u>Laurencekirk</u>	<u>01561 376490</u>
<u>Maud</u>	<u>01771 613967</u>
<u>Peterhead</u>	<u>01779 473368</u>
<u>Portlethen</u>	<u>01224 666200 or 01224 786199</u>
<u>Stonehaven</u>	<u>01569 768390</u>
<u>Strichen</u>	<u>01771 638200</u>
<u>Turriff</u>	<u>01888 569260</u>
<u>Westhill</u>	<u>01224 849499</u>

Or, if out of hours by calling the Social Work Out of Hours Service on **03456 081 206**.

Police Scotland can be contacted on telephone number **101**.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## 1. Background

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is our way of working with all children and young people. It is the foundation for all children's services. The approach focuses on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and how practitioners can act to deliver the best outcomes for them.

In Education and Children's Services our vision is that we will:

- Put the child and their family at the centre of everything we do.
- Provide intervention early 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.
- Focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure a single planning process for children and young people.

## 2. Child protection

Child protection is part of our approach to Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Curriculum for Excellence. Every child or young person has the right to be safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. They have the right to be protected and be safe from harm. They have the right to be listened to and to have their views taken into account. They should expect to get the help they need, when they need it and be able to access help close to where they live.

## 3. Responsibility of all

Child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and young people and families regardless of whether or not they come into direct contact with children. All workers must be fully informed of their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe. All services working with children, young people and families are expected to identify and consider the wellbeing of children and to share concerns appropriately.

All agencies, professional and public bodies and services that deliver services and work with children and their families have a responsibility to consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement.

Education practitioners, school staff and staff in other learning settings play a crucial role in the support and protection of children as well as the development of their wellbeing.

Teachers are likely to have the greatest level of day-to-day contact with children and so are well placed to observe physical and psychological changes in a child that could indicate abuse and to contribute to the assessment of vulnerable children. Other staff are also likely to be

well placed to observe changes.

Education staff may be the first to be aware that families are experiencing difficulties in looking after their children. Children and young people often see teachers as a trusted source of help and support. They should share information about any concerns with the social work service or the police at an early stage via their established reporting mechanisms and refer to the Children's Reporter if there might be a need for Compulsory Measures of Supervision. They may be asked to help with investigations into reported or suspected abuse or neglect.

The role of the head teacher and senior staff in education services is key to the identification of wellbeing concerns and participation in the assessment and planning for individuals to improve outcomes.

Where a child goes missing from education, education services within the local authority will conduct investigations in line with the Children Missing From Education procedures. This will involve a collaborative approach, sharing information across services and agencies to re-establish contact with the missing child.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Director of Education and Children's Services**

The Director of Education and Children's Services has the role of ensuring that education services fulfil the requirements of the National Guidelines 2014.

##### **Head of Service (Additional Support Needs)**

As senior manager responsible for child protection, the role of the Head of Service (ASN) is to provide leadership and strategic direction for the management of child protection within education services.

##### **Quality Improvement Manager**

The Quality Improvement Manager (ASN) is the key member of staff with responsibility for improvement planning and policy development within education services.

##### **Development Officer (Child Protection)**

The Development Officer for Child Protection will support training development in relation to child protection. Any Child Protection Co-ordinator who requires advice on a child protection matter should contact their local Social Work Office or Policy Scotland. The Development Officer should not be the first point of contact for child protection concerns.

##### **Head Teachers and Service Managers**

The Head Teacher or Service Manager is ultimately accountable for the establishment's or service's actions in response to child protection concerns and its activities to keep children safe and well.

The Head Teacher or Service Manager has the following responsibilities in respect to child protection:

- Ensure all staff fully understand their responsibilities for child protection.
- Ensure establishment practice complies with local authority guidelines.

- Ensure the curriculum equips children and young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes to protect themselves.
- Appoint a suitably experienced and trained Child Protection Co-ordinator. In primary schools this will be the Head Teacher. In secondary schools this will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Other services must follow guidance provided by Service Managers.
- Appoint a Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator. In small settings, arrangements can be agreed for a Child Protection Co-ordinator from within the local area to be nominated as Depute.
- Ensure that all employees know who the named Child Protection Co-ordinator is.
- Ensure arrangements are clearly communicated to all staff and contact details are displayed in every classroom, activity space and main office.
- Ensure that all visiting staff, students, volunteers, temporary, newly appointed and permanent employees know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator is.
- Ensure children, young people and parents have information and understand procedures on child protection and that senior staff can be approached at any time.
- Ensure recruitment and induction procedures give due regard to child protection.
- Ensure staff contribute effectively to multi-agency child protection procedures including:
  - Reports being submitted timeously for Child Protection Case Conferences or for Children's Hearings.
  - The most appropriate member of staff attending Case Conferences, Core Group meetings or Children's Hearings.
  - Contributing to and implementing Child Protection Plans.
  - Take appropriate action in conjunction with the school's Quality Improvement Officer or Service Manager when there are concerns or allegations about a member of school staff.
- Monitor and evaluate child protection policy and procedures and, where necessary, plan for improvement.

If the Head Teacher or Service Manager is not the Child Protection Co-ordinator they must maintain an overview of any information received by the Child Protection Co-ordinator, decisions on recording and referral, subsequent liaison with other agencies during investigations, proceedings and action planning to support children and young people.

### **Child Protection Co-ordinator**

The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is critical to the effective operation of child protection procedures within the school or child care setting. The Child Protection Co-ordinator has a legal duty to share concerns appropriately.

All establishments must have an assigned Child Protection Co-ordinator and Depute. The duties associated with role will be undertaken or delegated by the Head Teacher or Service Manager, taking account of the circumstances relating to each establishment or service.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator has the following responsibilities in respect to child protection:

- Be the point of contact for employees and other agencies on child protection.
- Implement the service's child protection policy and procedures.
- Comply with authority guidelines on appropriate and secure record systems for child protection information.
- Listen to and record the concerns of children and young people, staff or third parties in relation to child protection.

- Make child protection notifications of concern in line with authority procedures and guidelines.
- Liaise with other agencies to support investigations, court proceedings, Children's Hearings and case reviews.
- Implement multi-agency child protection plans.
- Communicate sensitively with parents in agreement with partner agencies.
- Have a strategic oversight of all concerns for individual children and monitor to identify patterns or accumulating concerns.
- Attend child protection training and Co-ordinators' meetings.
- Ensure that all employees have access to child protection guidelines and appropriate materials.
- Develop staff understanding of child protection, their roles in relation to child protection and the procedures.
- Ensure that all new staff receive child protection training during induction.
- Ensure that all staff in the establishment are trained annually in accordance with Aberdeenshire's child protection training calendar.
- Ensure that a child protection training record is maintained.
- Lead in the development of policy and practice to meet national and local guidance.
- Ensure appropriate support to staff affected by child protection issues.
- Promote and support curriculum input in relation to personal safety/child protection.
- Liaise and co-operate with other establishments and agencies where appropriate.
- Monitor and evaluate practice regularly.
- Use the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis to evaluate child protection arrangements and practice.

## 5. Role of individual staff members

Every member of staff working with children has a responsibility to:

- Help keep children and young people safe and well.
- Be vigilant for signs that children and young people may need support, are at risk, or are suffering from harm and/or neglect.
- Immediately contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator when they have concerns or hear allegations.
- Contribute to taking action or supporting children and young people following identifications of concerns.
- Ensure their work is carried out in ways that prevent harm to children and young people and maintain safety and wellbeing of all involved.
- Attend establishment based child protection briefings and training and record this on a suitable Professional Learning Record e.g. MyGTCS.

All members of staff should discuss any concerns they have about a child or young person with the Child Protection Co-ordinator however minor these worries may seem. The Child Protection Co-ordinator may have additional knowledge or information which, when added to, clearly indicates that the child may be at risk.

All members of staff have the same power as any other individual to pass information directly to Social Work or Police Scotland, if they feel that a crime has been committed.

## 6. Role of visiting staff (including educational psychologists, specialist

## teachers, supply staff, music instructors and active school co-ordinators)

The roles and responsibilities outlined above apply equally to staff visiting the school for whatever reason, and:

- Visiting staff should familiarize themselves with the child protection arrangements in each setting they visit to ensure they are prepared in advance to appropriately respond to any concerns about a child or young person as they arise;
- Visiting staff must ensure they know who the Child Protection Co-ordinator or Designated Officer is in each setting they work in and ensure they share any concerns, however minor, with that member of staff as soon as they arise;
- Visiting staff must check regularly that they are aware of any changes in arrangements for child protection.

### 7. Child protection training

Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services requires that all adults working with children and young people will receive adequate training to ensure that they are confident, well informed, and supported to promote the protection of children. Training must be provided for all employees and will depend on the post held. Advice on appropriate training is published annually. The Child Protection Co-ordinator should also ensure volunteers are suitably trained.

### 8. Induction

As part of school based induction procedures all employees must receive an overview of child protection procedures within one week of taking up post. Staff must complete role related training as appropriate within twelve weeks of taking up appointment.

# Practice Guidelines

## 1.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 to their age and stage of development.

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

## 2.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:

- Developing an ethos which safeguards and promotes the welfare and wellbeing of all children.
- Providing clear guidance for all staff on the roles and responsibilities involved in child protection.
- Ensuring that staff respond appropriately when abuse is identified.
- Describing the processes and procedures that all staff must follow in response to disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse.
- Ensuring effective interagency communication, collaborative working and provide a consistent framework for practice.

## 3.Child Protection Measures

Formal child protection measures can be broadly divided into a number of different stages:

- Recognising actual or potential harm to a child.
- Sharing concerns and initial information-gathering.



- Joint investigation/assessment.
- Medical examination and assessment.
- Child Protection Case Conferences.
- Developing a Child Protection Plan.

Education staff have a key role to play in recognising actual or potential harm to a child and in sharing concerns and initial information gathering. Social Work and/or Police staff lead on 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.

#### **4. 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 a period of time or in response to a particular incident. Concerns may arise as a result of direct observation or reports from the child or young person themselves, from a third party, or from concerns raised anonymously.

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.

#### **5. 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 in relation to what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.

Risk is part of everyday life. GIRFEC practice model tools present a series of tools which are integral to the use of risk assessment: the Wellbeing Indicators; the My World Triangle; the Resilience Matrix and the National Risk Framework 2012. These can be found on the GIRFEC – Aberdeenshire website, [www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org](http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org).

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.

#### **6. 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, it is essential that practitioners consider the following questions:

- Is this child at immediate risk?
- What is placing this child at immediate risk?
- What needs to happen to remove this risk now?

When a Child Protection Co-ordinator reaches a decision to contact Social Work 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 outcome of the contact will be:

- That the child is considered to be at risk of immediate or significant harm.
- That the child is considered to be a “child in need”.
- 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.

Where a concern has been raised but no further action is required, the five GIRFEC questions should be used and a single agency assessment considered.

Staff should be aware all contact will be recorded by Social Work staff.

## **7. 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 enquiries 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.

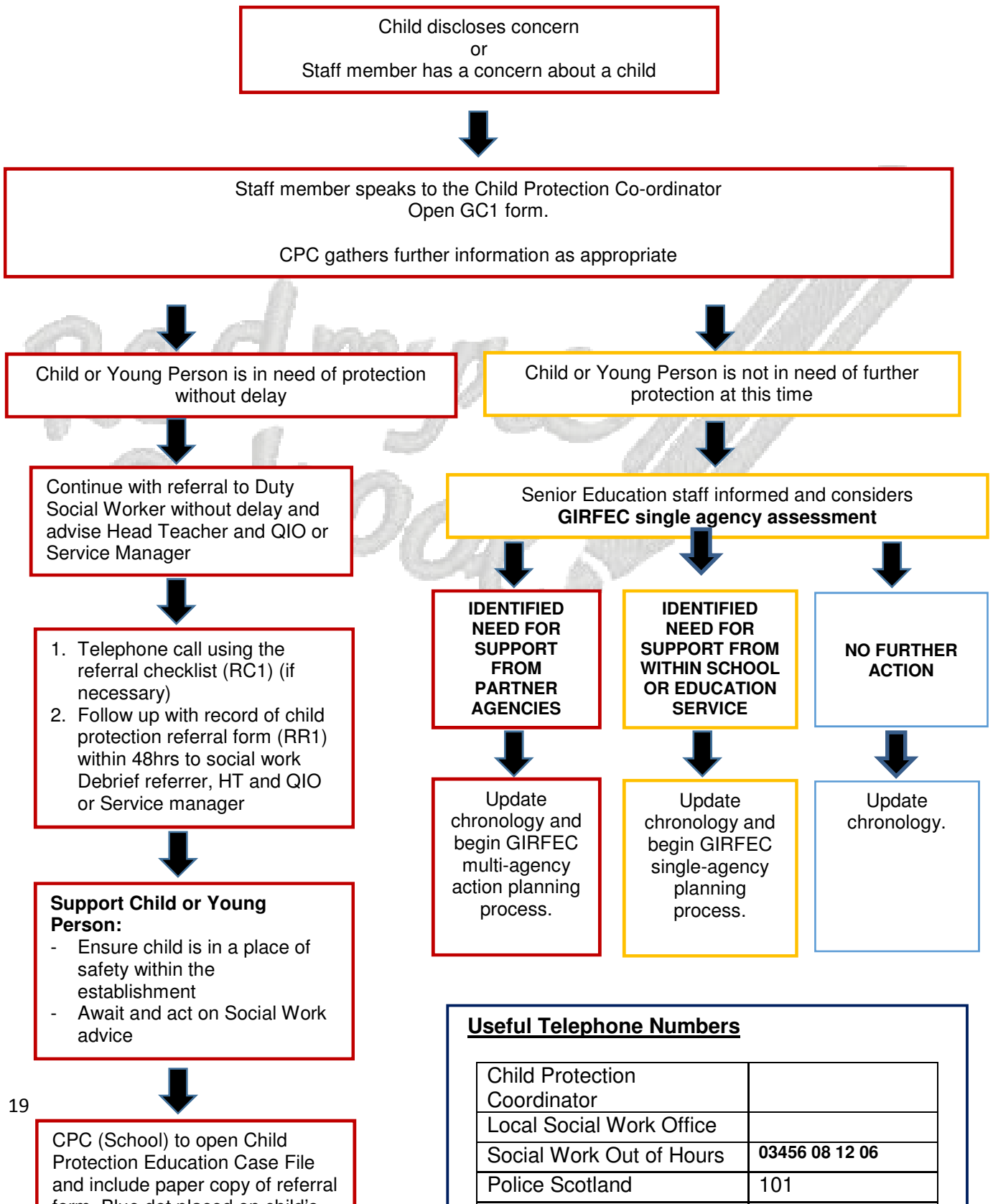
In Aberdeenshire, allegations of child abuse are investigated by Social Work and Police officers who will also liaise with their Education and Children’s Services and Health colleagues, where appropriate. The information gathered from the initial enquiries will be used to review initial assessment of 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.

Where immediate risk is not identified, practitioners should consider the health and wellbeing of the child and the five GIRFEC questions should be used.

The process of responding to child protection concerns in diagrammatical form is shown overleaf.

## Child Protection Procedure in Education Flow Chart Recognising actual or potential harm to a child



### Useful Telephone Numbers

Child Protection Coordinator	
Local Social Work Office	
Social Work Out of Hours	03456 08 12 06
Police Scotland	101

## 8. Responding to Concerns About Children and Young People

### All staff

If any member of staff has a concerns 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:

- Remember that the role of the educational establishment or other services is to observe, record and report. Do not investigate.
- Discuss your concerns immediately with the Child Protection Co-ordinator (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.
- Ensure that the information you have is accurately recorded using form GC1.
- Be aware that the CPC will consider this information and may gather further information, dependent upon the situation.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- If the incident occurs out of hours, or it is not possible to speak to the CPC or Depute, then it is important that you do not wait. Immediately contact the Out Of Hours Emergency Social Work Service on 03456 081206 or if you believe a crime has taken place the Police, directly.

Additional guidance on how to react to a disclosure can be found in the appendix section of this document.

## 9. Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC)

Child Protection Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that appropriate action is taken in response to concerns being reported. Child Protection Coordinators must follow the Child Protection Procedure in Education Flow Chart.

- The CPC will gather further information from appropriate sources as a matter of urgency.
- The CPC will make an assessment and determines whether or not the child is in need of protection without delay.
- 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.
- The CPC will share information that is relevant, necessary, legitimate, appropriate and proportionate with others, including the Head Teacher, Service Manager, and Quality Improvement Officer.
- The CPC will co-operate fully where additional information or clarification is needed by Social Work or the Police.

- When feedback is available the CPC must ensure this is recorded on RR1 and on the appropriate chronology.

## 10. Recording Decisions and Actions

When the CPC has reached a decision 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 Work or the Police will determine:

- That the child is considered to be at risk of immediate or significant harm.
- That the child is considered to be a “child in need”.
- 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:

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

- 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.
- The Child Protection Coordinator will ensure that form GC1 is filed in the restricted access area of the Pupil Progress Report (PPR) or Child Protection Education File if already open.

## 11. 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 prior to this discussion.

## 12 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:

- Bring together all the information from people who work with the child.
- Use this information to analyse and to assess the extent to which the child is at risk of abuse.
- Agree what measures need to be taken by various agencies to protect the child or promote their welfare.
- Place the child on the Child Protection register and if it is considered necessary to put a Child Protection Plan in place.
- 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 prior to the review to ensure the progress of the plan.

## 13. 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.

## 14. Allegations Against a Member of Staff or Other Known Adult

On occasion Child Protection concerns may be identified or raised in relation to someone working in an Aberdeenshire Council educational establishment or service. This may include staff of that establishment or service, visiting Aberdeenshire Council employees, or workers not directly employed by Aberdeenshire Council.

Throughout, the first and paramount consideration must always be the safety of children and young people. However, in order to separate responsibilities towards the child from responsibilities towards 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, a Head of Service will assume the overall responsibility for ensuring that the response of the Service is co-ordinated and effective.

In all cases the following advice must be followed:

- 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.
- The Child Protection Co-ordinator is responsible for immediately reporting the concern to the Head Teacher or head of establishment who will immediately inform the relevant Head of Service Education.
- The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is to ensure that standard child protection processes are followed.
- The role of the Head Teacher is to ensure that appropriate authority processes in relation to staff conduct are followed and to ensure that quality personal support is available to those concerned.
- In many instances, the police and social work will conclude that the matter should be investigated by the police. It is therefore important to avoid any action that may prejudice this investigation, including alerting the alleged perpetrator and alleged child victim(s).
- As each situation is unique, it is important that direction is taken from the police and social work on the actions to be taken.
- At an appropriate stage consideration should be given as to whether there is a necessity for the member of staff to be removed from the establishment, without prejudice, but pending the conclusion of the police/social work investigation. This decision should be taken by the Head Teacher after consultation with the Child Protection Officer, Head of Service and after appropriate discussion with a senior officer from Human Resources.
- Where the Child Protection Co-ordinator is the Head Teacher, the Head of Service will arrange for a substitute to be appointed to oversee personal support of staff. If the concern is about the most senior member of staff or the Child Protection Coordinator, the member of staff must report this to the appropriate Head of Service.

## **Appendix 1 - Possible Signs of a Cause for Concern**

<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injuries, particularly if they are recurrent.</li> <li>• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.</li> <li>• Refusal to explain and discuss injuries.</li> <li>• Untreated injuries or delay in reporting them.</li> <li>• Admission of punishment which appears excessive.</li> <li>• Fear of parents being contacted.</li> <li>• Fear of returning home.</li> <li>• Fear of medical help.</li> <li>• Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.</li> <li>• Withdrawal from physical contact.</li> <li>• Self-destructive tendencies.</li> <li>• Aggression towards others.</li> <li>• Chronic running away.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emotional Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of parents being contacted.</li> <li>• Admission of punishment which appears excessive.</li> <li>• Physical, intellectual and emotional development lags.</li> <li>• Significant decline in concentration.</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders.</li> <li>• Over-reaction to mistakes.</li> <li>• Continual self-deprecation.</li> <li>• Fear of new situations.</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.</li> <li>• Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, constant hair-twisting, excessive thumb-sucking).</li> <li>• Self-mutilation.</li> <li>• Extremes of passivity or aggression.</li> <li>• Drug/solvent abuse.</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing/scavenging.</li> <li>• Indiscriminate friendliness.</li> <li>• Socio-emotional immaturity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hint about secrets they cannot tell.</li> <li>• Say that a friend has a problem.</li> <li>• Ask if you will keep a secret if they tell you.</li> <li>• Seem to be keeping secret something which is worrying them.</li> <li>• Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught.</li> <li>• Have unexplained sources of money.</li> <li>• Exhibit sudden inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn or regressing to younger behaviour patterns.</li> <li>• Stop enjoying previously liked activities, such as music, sports, art, scouts, brownies.</li> <li>• Be reluctant to undress for gym.</li> <li>• Become fearful of or refuse to see certain adults for no apparent reason.</li> <li>• Having terrifying dreams.</li> <li>• Act in a sexual way, inappropriate to their age.</li> <li>• Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse.</li> <li>• Start wetting themselves.</li> <li>• Have urinary infections, bleeding or soreness in the genital, anal or throat areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neglect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant hunger.</li> <li>• Emaciation.</li> <li>• Constant tiredness.</li> <li>• Poor personal hygiene.</li> <li>• Poor state of clothing.</li> <li>• Untreated medical problems.</li> <li>• Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school;</li> <li>• Low self-esteem.</li> <li>• Destructive tendencies.</li> <li>• Neurotic behaviour e.g. rocking; constant hair-twisting; excess thumb-sucking.</li> <li>• Limited social relationships.</li> <li>• Chronic running away.</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing or scavenging.</li> <li>• Significant lack of growth.</li> <li>• Weight loss.</li> <li>• Hair loss.</li> <li>• Poor skin or muscle tone.</li> <li>• Circulatory disorders.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 - Responding to a Disclosure and Guidance on Making Notes

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

- Stay calm.



- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- 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.
- Listen to the child or young person and let them know you take what they say seriously.
- Give the child or young person time to say what they want to say.
- Try not to show alarm no matter how difficult the information.
- Do not ask any leading questions or suggest who might be responsible, no matter that clues may be contained in the information.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are doing the right thing by telling someone.
- Tell the child what action you are going to take.
- Do not ask the child to repeat their disclosure to another person.
- Remember that you too may need support as listening to an abused child is difficult.

As soon as practicable, using the language used by the child or young person, make a handwritten note using form RFC 1 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

- Notes should be made carefully, accurately and factually and as soon as practicable after the event. Hand written notes are acceptable.
- All notes must be signed and dated, with name and post held printed clearly.
- Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and/or sketched.
- At no time should photographic records be taken.
- Any relevant comment by the child or by an adult who might be the abuser, should be recorded, preferably quoting the words actually used.
- Opinion should be restricted to the demeanour of the child.
- The personal opinions of members of staff must not be included.

## Appendix 3 - Advice for Supporting the Child

The following points should be discussed with Police and Social Work if a child or young person is to be interviewed within Education and Children's Services premises:

- Whether the Child Protection coordinator has a role in the interview.
- How the child or young person should be informed by the Police/Social Work about what may be done to keep them safe.
- 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 Work may decide that a Joint Interview will be carried out with the child. This is a particular interview carried out by a specially trained Police Officers and a specially trained Social Worker. Police and Social Work will make arrangements 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 particular locations which have this equipment. Where appropriate, the decision might be made to make use of portable equipment.

## **Appendix 4 – Advice for Feeding Back to Referrer**

Raising concerns in relation to child protection may be difficult for those involved. It is important that anyone in that position receives reassurance that their concerns have been taken seriously, and appropriate action taken. However, it is equally important to maintain confidentiality at all times.

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

## **Appendix 5 - 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:

- Records and reports should be kept in an authority Child Protection Education File and stored securely.
- When a Child Protection file is opened, this should be identified on the outside of the child's Pupil Progress Record (PPR) with a round blue sticker.
- All Child Protection Education File should be stored alongside PPRs.
- CPCs must ensure they comply with service arrangements to ensure Child Protection Education Files are accessible during holiday periods.
- A record should be kept of when records are consulted and by whom.
  
- 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
- 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.

- 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.

## Appendix 6 – Forms

GIRFEC Concern Sheet (GC1)

Child Protection Telephone 16-18 Referral Checklist (RC1)

Child Protection Record of Referral Form for Establishments (RR1)



## GIRFEC Concern Sheet

**GC1**



For completion by staff when they become aware of child welfare concerns, in accordance with government, local authority and school child protection policy and procedures. The designated Child Protection Co-ordinator will monitor concerns and respond to them as appropriate. This information will be disclosed only to those staff who need to know for the purposes of child protection. Concerns will usually be shared with parent/carer, unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm.

Name of Child		Date of Birth	/ /
---------------	--	---------------	-----

Name of person making this record		Role of person making this record	
Date of concern	/ /		
Nature of concern			
Attach additional sheet(s) if necessary			
Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered 5 GIRFEC questions</li> <li>Update chronology</li> <li>Consider who to inform</li> <li></li> </ul>		
Signed Designation		Date	/ /

Reviewed by :	(Signature)
Any further action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronology updated <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>Others informed (please detail) <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
Date	/ /
Final outcome	
Signature	
Date	/ /

**Child Protection  
Telephone Referral Checklist**

**RC1**

1. Ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker, Senior Practitioner or Duty Manager in that order, stating clearly you wish to make a child protection referral
2. If none of the above are available immediately provide the details of the child you wish to refer (this will allow for any records to be located) and establish how soon you will be contacted.
3. When you speak with the relevant worker, note their name and designation
4. If details not left previously, identify the child, spelling out their name/date of birth/ address/ parents (carers)/ siblings if known
5. Inform the Duty Worker if you are aware that the child is staying anywhere other than the address you have already provided
6. Explain clearly the exact nature of your concern about the child – detailing how, when and why you came to be concerned and what action you have already taken.
7. Provide details of all others who are aware of this information
8. Establish any immediate action social work intend to take
9. Establish who will inform parents/carers and when this will be done
10. Check whether the child (and/or siblings) should be collected/dissmised as normal and establish what should happen if this is not to be the case
11. Check what you are able to say if parent/carer arrives before any action is taken by social work/ police
12. Confirm when you can be expected to receive feedback and from whom – if action is to be taken that evening it is important that you receive feedback by the beginning of the next school day.
13. Establish what further action will be required from the school
14. Email a copy of completed Child Protection Record of Referral Form within 48 hours, ensuring copy is posted to Senior Child Protection Officer

**Child Protection Record of Referral Form for Establishments**

**RRI**

School / Establishment			
Name of Child/Young Person:			
Date of Birth		Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Class/Group/Project		Age	

Concerns, including name of member of staff who raised initial concern	
Actions taken including details of Social Work / Police contacted	

Referred by		Date	
Report sent to (please specify)			
Signed			

Information shared with	Social Work	Police	Other (Please State)
Response received from	Social Work <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please State) <input type="checkbox"/>
Date			

**This form should be filed in the Child Protection Education Case File if open or confidential section of PPR**