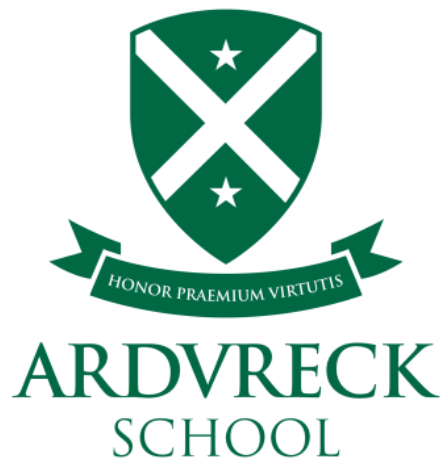




Child Protection, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy

Updated: September 2026

The School's Child Protection Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy has been developed in response to the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, updates 2023; Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014..

Updates: 2023

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/>

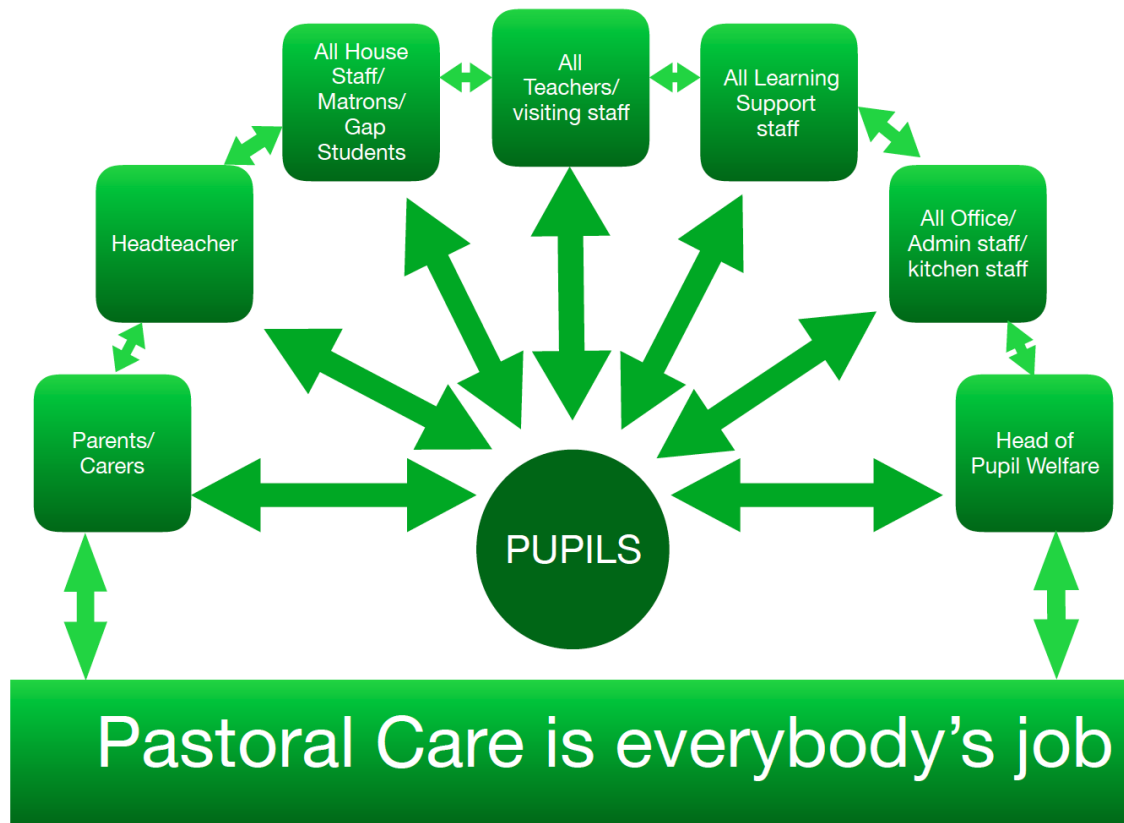
Child Protection, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy

Most recently, this policy document references the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, updated 2023.

It is the policy of the Board of Governors that Ardvreck School adheres to the procedures and policies stated in the SCIS Guidance on Wellbeing and Child Protection 2019 edition and the School's Pastoral Care is in line with GIRFEC (Getting it right for Every Child), the Early Years Framework, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and build on the Children's Charter 2004.

Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) - Peter Grant, Headmaster at Ardvreck School.

In the absence of the Headmaster, reports should be sent to Sarah Mannion (Child Protection Coordinator no 2/CPC2).



If you don't feel safe ...



and don't know what to do ...



talk to us ...

 **01738 476768**

we can help you!



Remember you have the right to feel safe and the right to be listened to and taken seriously. If you do not feel safe speak to someone who can help you.



ChildProtection
Preston

Child Protection Duty Team ☎ **01738 476768**
(24 hour service.)

Tayside Police ☎ **0300 111 2222**

Childline ☎ **0800 11 11**

In an emergency when a child has been seriously hurt or injured contact the emergency service, call 999.

Designed by Chief Executive's Service (2011/2012 - Feb 12)

The Context

This policy is set within the framework of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). The core message of GIRFEC is that everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing for each child and work towards a unified approach, with less bureaucracy and more freedom to respond to children. Children should get the help they need when they need it. Their welfare is always paramount. GIRFEC is underpinned by common values and principles which apply across all aspects of working with children and young people:

- Promoting the well-being of individual children and young people: this is based on understanding how children and young people develop in their families and communities and addressing their needs at the earliest possible time;
- Keeping children and young people safe: emotional and physical safety is fundamental and is wider than child protection;
- Putting the child at the centre: children and young people should have their views listened to and they should be involved in decisions which affect them;
- Taking a whole child approach: recognising that what is going on in one part of a child or young person's life can affect many other areas of his or her life;
- Building on strengths and promoting resilience: using a child or young person's existing networks and support where possible;
- Promoting opportunities and valuing diversity: children and young people should feel valued in all circumstances and practitioners should create opportunities to celebrate diversity;
- Providing additional help that is appropriate,
- Proportionate and timely: providing help as early as possible and considering short and long-term needs;
- Working in partnership with families: supporting wherever possible those who know the child or young person well, know what they need, what works well for them and what may not be helpful;
- Supporting informed choice: supporting children, young people and families in understanding what help is possible and what their choices are;
- Respecting confidentiality and sharing information: seeking agreement to share information that is relevant and proportionate while safeguarding children and young people's right to confidentiality;
- Promoting the same values across all working relationships: recognising that respect, patience, honesty, reliability, resilience and integrity are qualities valued by children, young people, their families and colleagues;
- Making the most of bringing together each worker's expertise: respecting the contribution of others and co-operating with them, recognising that sharing responsibility does not mean acting beyond a worker's competence or responsibilities;
- Coordinating help: recognising that children, young people and their families need practitioners to work together, when appropriate, to promote the best possible help;
- Building a competent workforce: to promote children and young people's wellbeing that are committed to contributing to individual learning and development and improvement of inter-professional practice.

What is Child Protection?

Child protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child protection guidance provides overall direction for agencies and professional disciplines where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. Child protection procedures (as described in Part 3) are initiated when police, social work or health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of significant harm.

Staff Training

All school staff receive yearly training in Child Protection. Additional updates are given during INSET days (Sept, Jan, April)

Headteacher and CPO2 complete yearly high-level training (SCIS) plus online assessment.

Pastoral team members complete yearly in-depth specific training (SCIS/PKC) in Child Protection plus online assessment.

All Teaching staff complete specific training provided by SCIS (online 'live' video) plus a follow up online assessment. (PKC)

All Teaching staff have completed online Trauma informed training. (TURAS) 2025-26

All other school staff complete a general online training/assessment.

All school staff complete .GOV Prevent training modules.

Child protection involves:

- immediate action, if necessary, to prevent significant harm to a child
- inter-agency investigation about the occurrence or probability of abuse or neglect, or of a criminal offence against a child. Investigation extends to other children affected by the same apparent risks as the child who is the subject of a referral

The context for child protection

- assessment and action to address the interaction of behaviour, relationships and conditions that may, in combination, cause or accelerate risks
- focus within assessment, planning and action upon listening to each child's voice and recognising their experience, needs and feelings
- collaboration between agencies and persistent efforts to work in partnership with parents in planning and action to prevent harm or reduce risk of harm
- recognition and support for the strengths, relationships and skills within the child and their world in order to form a plan that reduces risk and builds resilience

Preventative and protective work may be needed at the same time. Preventative, restorative, supportive, collaborative and therapeutic approaches do not stop because compulsory measures or urgent protective legal steps are taken. A tailored blend of care and professional authority may be needed whether a child at risk is at home with family or accommodated, or when the child is to transition between placements or to be reunified with birth family after a placement away from home.

Protecting children involves preventing harm and/or the risk of harm from abuse or neglect. Child protection investigation is triggered when the impact of harm is deemed to

be significant. There is no legal definition of significant harm or the distinction between harm and significant harm. The extent to which harm is significant will relate to the severity or anticipated severity of impact upon a child's health and development. Professional judgement involves forming a view on the impact of an accumulation of acts, events and gaps or omissions, and sometimes on the impact of a single event. Judgement means making a decision about a child's needs, the capacity of parents or carers to meet those needs, and the likelihood of harm, significant or otherwise, arising.

A National Risk Assessment Toolkit is a resource which integrates the GIRFEC National Practice Model in a generic approach to assessment of risk, strength and resilience in the child's world.

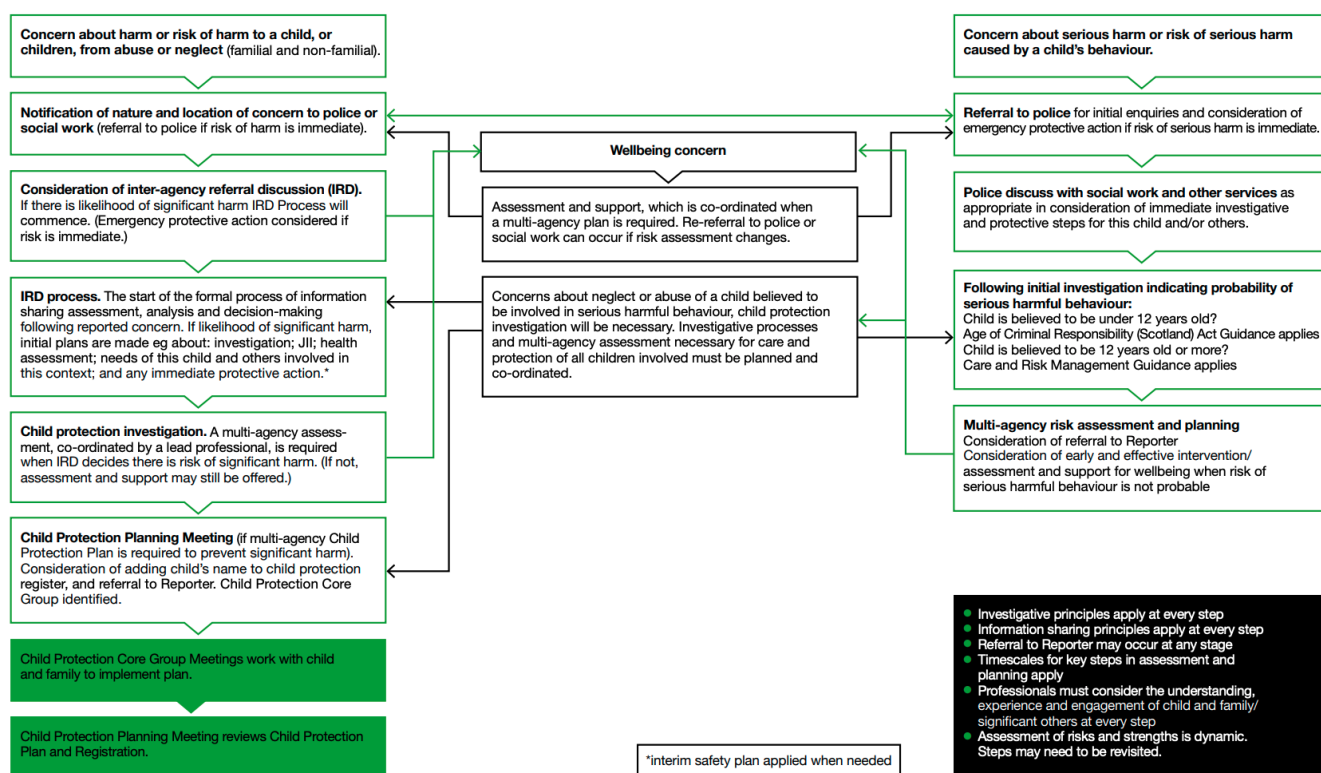
In assessing whether harm is or may become 'significant', it will be relevant to consider:

- the child's experience, needs and feelings as far as they are known
- the nature, degree and extent of physical or emotional harm apparent
- the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect
- overall parenting capacity
- the apparent or anticipated impact given the child's age and stage of development.
- extent of any premeditation
- the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and any other factors that may accentuate risk to do with child, family or wider context

The reactions, perceptions, wishes and feelings of the child must also be considered, with account taken of their age, language development and level of understanding. This will depend on effective communication, including with those children and young people who find communication difficult because of their age, impairment or particular psychological or social situation. It is important to observe what children do as well as what they say, and to bear in mind that children may experience a strong desire to be loyal to their parents or carers (who may also hold some power over the child). Steps should be taken to ensure that any accounts of adverse experiences given by children are as accurate and complete as possible, and that they are recorded fully.



Child Protection Process



What is a Wellbeing Concern?

Staff may express a concern about anything that affects (or has the possibility of affecting) the well-being, happiness or potential of the child. It may relate to a single event or observation, a series of events, or an attribute of the child or someone associated with them. Normally this concern will be shared with the Tutor, Teachers, Housemaster or Housemistress. This should be logged and recorded in the day book on Engage (Management Information System). A Wellbeing plan can also be completed if the well-being concern is ongoing. These are reviewed termly. The Wellbeing of all pupils should be assessed using the Wellbeing indicators shown on the GIRFEC wheel, termly; and followed up with one-to-one discussions with each pupil to ensure well being is monitored. It is our aim that our Policies and our PSHE programme reflect the values summarised by the wheel. The UNCRC informs the GIRFEC approach.

The five questions that should be asked with reference to a concern are:

1. What is getting in the way of this child or young person's well-being?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
3. What can I do now to help this child or young person?
4. What can school do to help this child or young person?
5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

Pastoral notes, copies of emails, and detailed records of meetings/phonecalls should be kept/stored on the Daybook on Engage (MIS)

The Wellbeing wheel breaks down a child/young person's wellbeing into the eight indicators. Under GIRFEC every child/young person has a right to be:

Safe
Healthy
Achieving
Nurtured
Active
Respected
Responsible
Included

In the first instance, these indicators allow the person with the concern to highlight the area(s) of a young person's life which is being affected.

A pupil who presents with a well-being concern through GIRFEC monitoring, information or concerns shared from parents, by a teacher, or at their own request, may have access to time with the school counsellor. The counsellor visits Ardvreck weekly to support pupils. Sessions are usually arranged through the Head of Pupil Wellbeing and parents are informed/permission sought to cover the charge. These may be ongoing/stopped at the discretion of the counsellor, child or parents.

The Scottish Government's commitment to the UNCRC is built on practical foundations in universal services. Parents need to know who they can contact when they need access to relevant support for their child's wellbeing. Within the GIRFEC approach, these foundations are carried out with members of staff who are able to signpost or provide a point of contact within universal services, if a child, young person or their parents want information, advice or help.

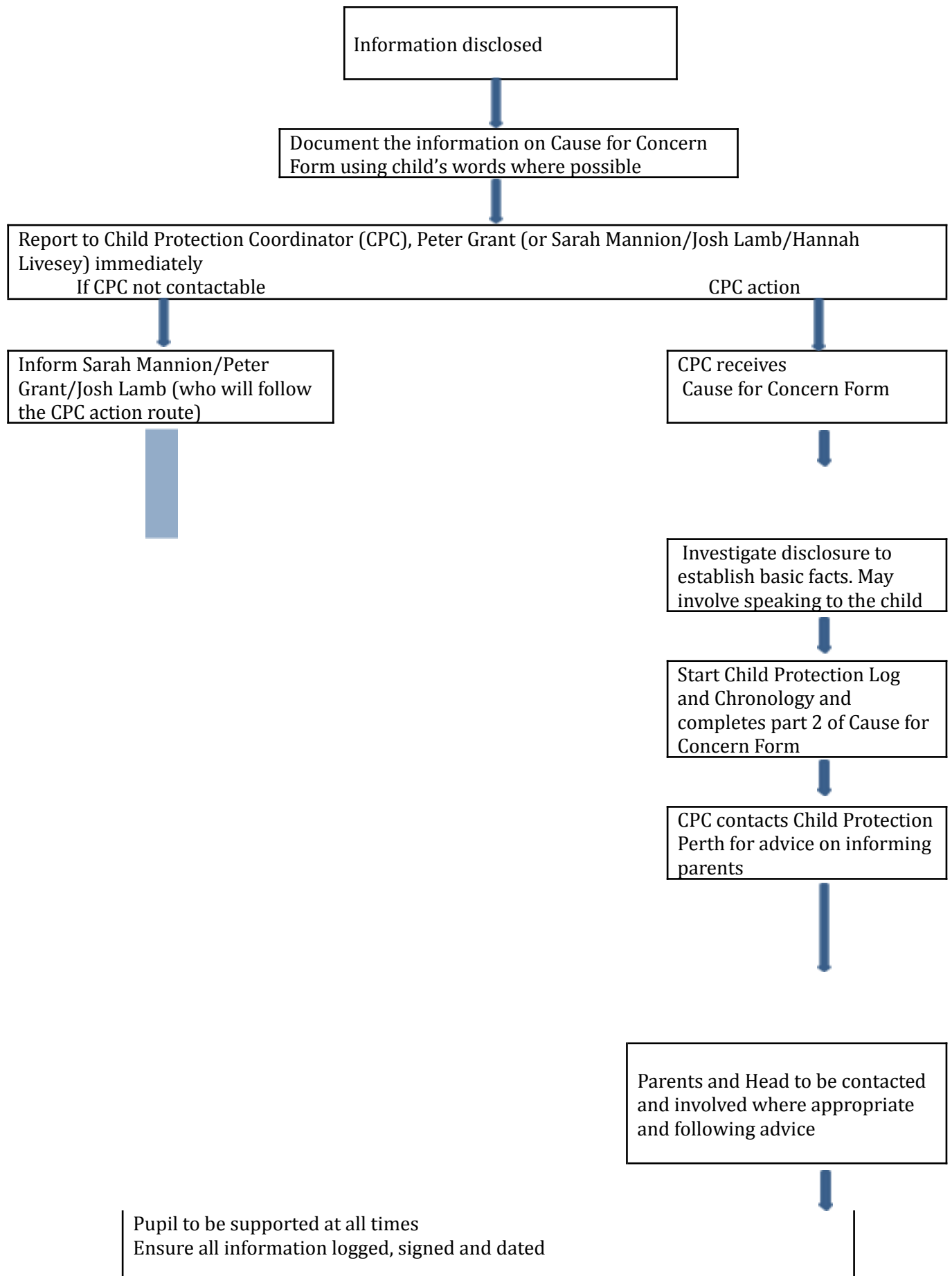
Protecting children and young people: a Framework for Standards was published alongside the Children's Charter (Scottish Executive 2004).



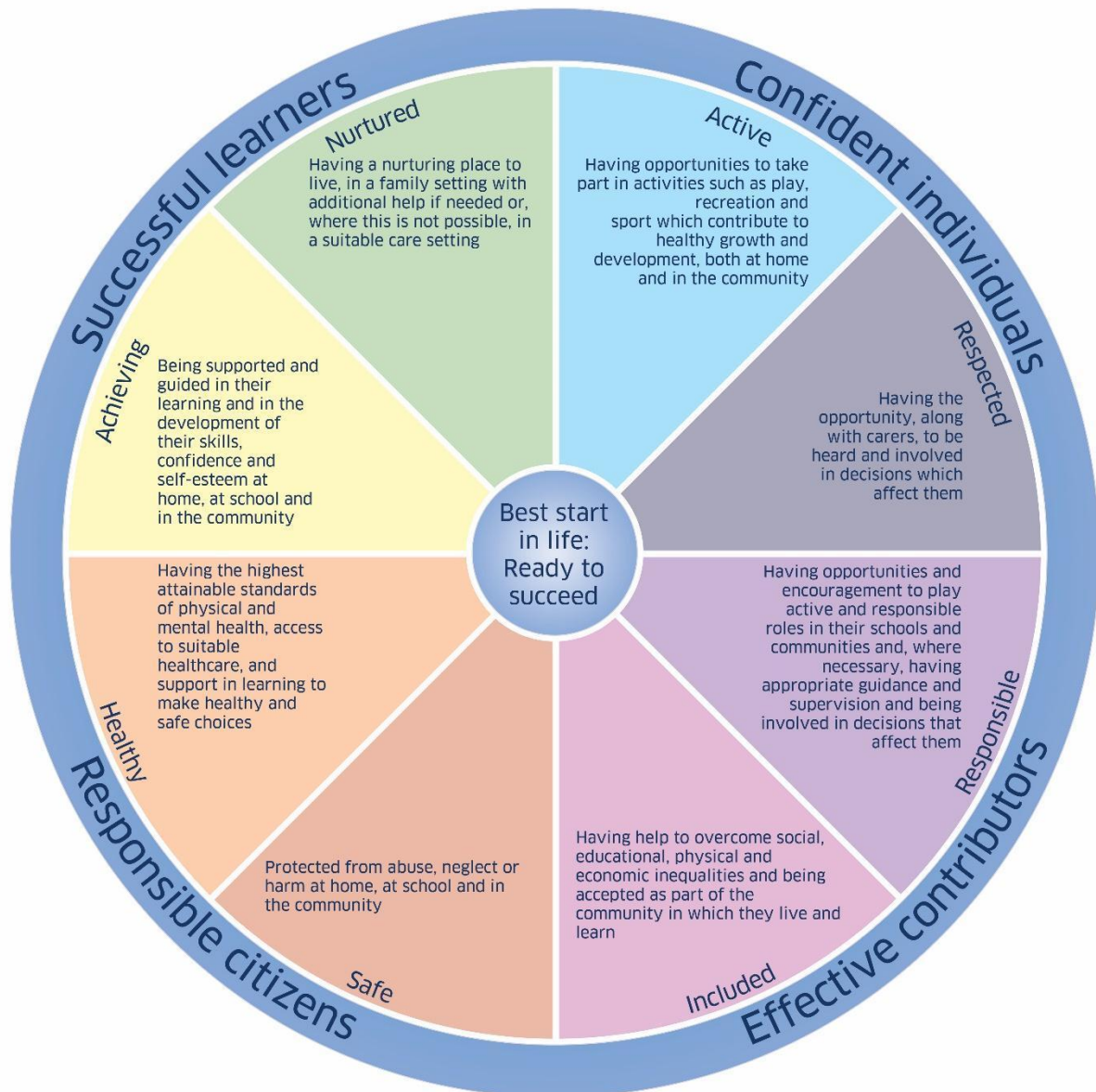
The principles:

- children get the help they need when they need it
- professionals take timely and effective action to protect children
- professionals ensure children are listened to and respected
- agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them
- agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans
- professionals are competent and confident
- agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children
- agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness

CHILD PROTECTION: DISCLOSURE FLOW CHART
SAME DAY IMMEDIATE ACTION



The Wellbeing Wheel

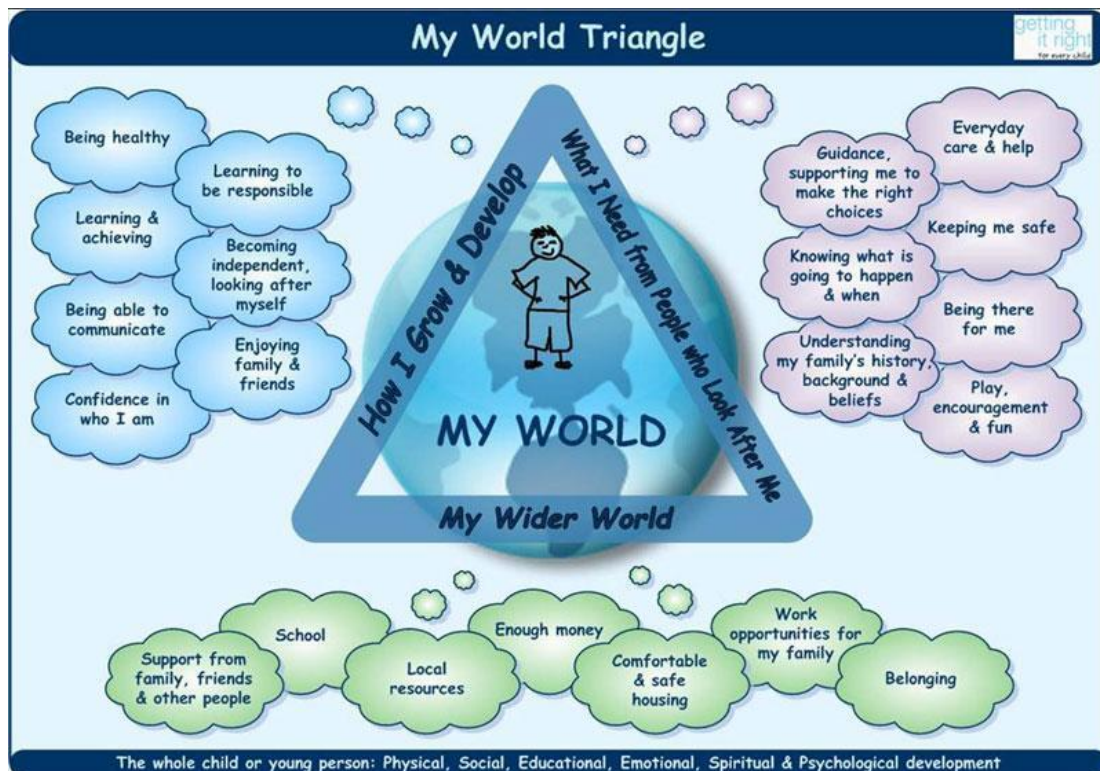


My World Triangle

Many factors shape development throughout childhood. Some factors are inherent such as ability or temperament whilst others are external such as family influences, social, economic and environmental factors. Race and culture will be important in shaping children's views about the world in which they live. Positive relationships with significant adults can be a protective factor throughout life.

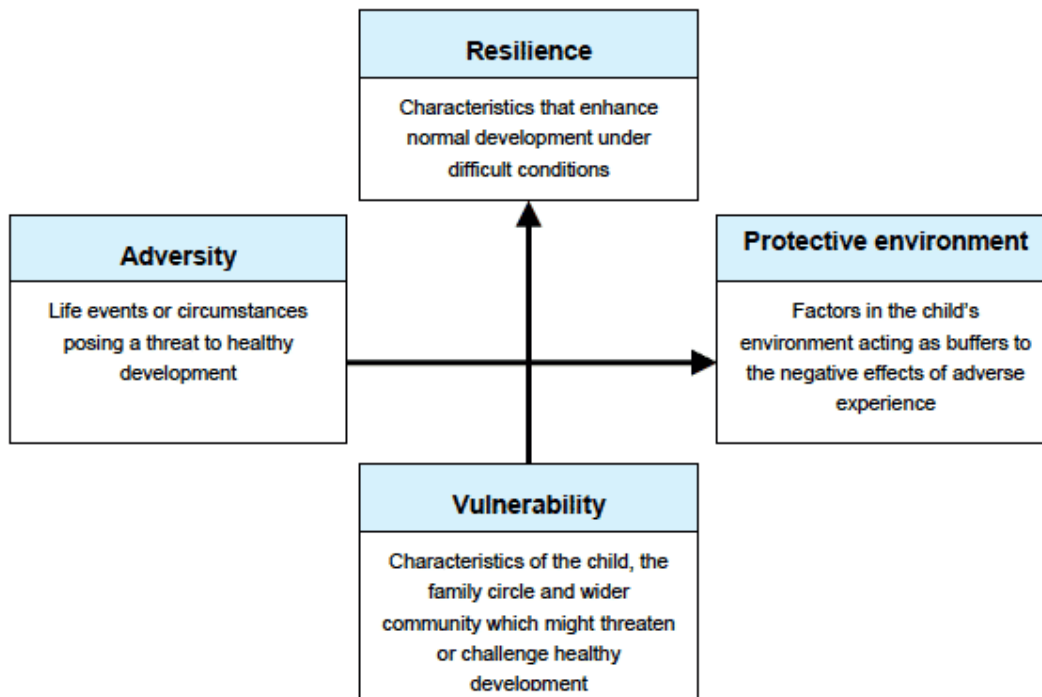
Traumatic events and experiences, (known as Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs) such as illness, early separation from parents or carers, abuse or neglect can lead to disruption or delay in a child's growth or development and affect their wellbeing. Later experiences can either reduce or increase the effect of early damaging experiences. Based on evidence from research, the My World Triangle provides a mental map that helps practitioners, children and families explore what is happening in a child's whole world and the likely impact on their wellbeing and development.

The greater the number of traumatic events in a child's life, the greater the likelihood of an impact upon wellbeing/physical health/mental health later in life.



The Resilience Matrix

The concept of resilience is fundamental to children's wellbeing. A resilience-based approach builds on the strengths in the child's whole world, drawing on what the family, community and universal services can offer. The Resilience/Vulnerability Matrix bringing together the two dimensions of vulnerability and resilience, and adversity and protective environment, provides a framework to help analysis of the strengths and pressures in the child's world. The two dimensions interact, and strengthening protective factors in the environment will help boost a child's resilience.



Where a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm, the primary concern will be for their safety and staff should contact the Child Protection Coordinator.
If in doubt please, pass it on.

Role of Staff

The Staff at Ardvreck School have an important part to play in the sensitive and delicate work of dealing with known or suspected cases of abuse. In addition, they have a role of particular importance in the identification of signs of abuse. There are opportunities within the context of school life for observing symptoms which could otherwise pass unnoticed. For advantage to be taken of these opportunities there is a need for some knowledge of those symptoms and an awareness of the action which requires to be taken once they are identified.

In a boarding school we have a particular responsibility to ensure that the children in our care are safe and secure. All Staff must be familiar with the content of these guidelines.

Signs of Possible Child Abuse

It is important to remember that lists such as the one below, are neither definitive nor exhaustive. The information has to be used in the context of the child's whole situation and in combination with a range of other information related to the child and his/her circumstances.

These are general indicators that the child may be troubled - though not necessarily about abuse. The child may have some of these problems or none at all. It is the combination, frequency and duration of signs that will alert you to a problem. Try to notice all changes in usual behaviour. Professional judgement should be used at all times.

There can be an overlap between all the different forms of child abuse, and all or several can co-exist.

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.

Signs of possible physical abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them.
- Excessive physical punishment.
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.
- Fear of returning home.
- Aggression towards others.
- Running away.

When considering the possibility of non-accidental injury it is important to remember that the injuries may have occurred for other reasons, e.g genuine accidents or medical disorders.

NEGLECT

Neglect consists in persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty, and is an indicator of both support and protection needs.

The GIRFEC SHANARRI indicators set out the essential wellbeing needs. Neglect of any or all of these can impact on healthy development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including

exclusion from home or abandonment); to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); to seek consistent access to appropriate medical care or treatment; to ensure the child receives education; or to respond to a child's essential emotional needs.

Malnutrition, lack of nurturing and lack of stimulation can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. For very young children the impact could quickly become life-threatening. Chronic physical and emotional neglect may also have a significant impact on teenagers.

Signs of possible physical neglect:

- Constant hunger.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Constant tiredness.
- Poor state of clothing.
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Low self-esteem.
- Poor peer relationship.
- Stealing.

NON-ORGANIC FAILURE TO THRIVE

Faltering growth refers to an inability to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones in the absence of medically discernible physical and genetic reasons. This condition requires further assessment and may be associated with chronic neglect.

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive:

- Significant lack of growth.
- Weight loss.
- Hair loss.
- Poor skin or muscle tone.
- Circulatory disorders.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 'Persistent' means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse is present to some extent in all types of ill treatment of a child, but it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

It may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person
- exploitation or corruption of a child, or imposition of demands inappropriate for their age or stage of development
- repeated silencing, ridiculing or intimidation
- demands that so exceed a child's capability that they may be harmful

- extreme overprotection, such that a child is harmed by prevention of learning, exploration and social development
- seeing or hearing the abuse of another (in accordance with the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018)

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Low self-esteem.
- Continual self-deprecation.
- Sudden speech disorder.
- Significant decline in concentration.
- Socio-emotional immaturity.
- 'Neurotic' behaviour (e.g., rocking, head banging).
- Self-mutilation.
- Compulsive stealing.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Running away.
- Indiscriminate friendliness.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age 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 children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology. Children who are trafficked across borders or within the UK may be at particular risk of sexual abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation

This extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault upon girls and women involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial,

sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter. Child protection processes will be considered up to the age of 18. Forced marriage may be a risk alongside other forms of so-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA). HBA includes practices used to control behaviour within families, communities, or other social groups, to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or 'honour'.

Not all children are able to tell parents that they have been assaulted/abused. Changes in behaviour may be a signal that something has happened. It is important to remember that in sexual assault there may well be no physical or behavioural signs.

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

Behavioural

- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults.
- Fear of a particular individual.
- Social isolation - withdrawal or introversion.
- Sleep disturbance (nightmares, irrational fears, bed wetting, fear of sleeping alone, needing a nightlight).
- Running away from home.
- Girls taking over the mothering role.
- Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for activities.
- Low self-esteem.
- Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse.
- Display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years.
- Unusual interest in the genitals of adults or children or animals.
- Expressing affection in an age inappropriate way, e.g., 'French kissing'.
- Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors.
- Abnormal, sexualised drawing.
- Fear of medical examinations.
- Developmental regression.
- Poor peer relations.
- Inappropriate or sexually harmful behaviours.
- Compulsive masturbation.
- Stealing.
- Psychosomatic factors, e.g., recurrent abdominal pain or headache.
- Having unexplained/abundance of sums of money and/or possessions.
- Sexual promiscuity

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

Physical/Medical

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark.
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks to the thighs or genital areas.
- Itch, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding from the rectum, vagina or penis.
- Pain on passing urine or recurrent urinary infection.
- Stained underwear.
- Unusual genital odour.
- Anxiety/depression.
- Eating disorders, e.g. anorexia nervosa or bulimia.
- Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Pregnancy - particularly when reluctant to name father.
- Venereal disease, sexually transmitted diseases.
- Soiling or wetting in children who have been trained.

- Self-mutilation/suicide attempts.

STAFF ACTION

In the event of a disclosure, or if a third party expresses serious concern, or if you suspect that a child may have been abused you should follow these guidelines:

If a child chooses to confide in you: treat it as an honour/with respect

- Listen sympathetically and with care
- Reassure the child that he/she is not to blame
- Do not show disbelief or any facial expressions – remain neutral/calm
- Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality
- Take the allegation seriously
- Affirm the child's feelings as expressed (don't tell the child how he/she should feel)
- Avoid being judgmental about the information given
- Avoid persistent questioning
- Keep notes and make a record on the same day using the cause for concern form
- Refer to the Child Protection Coordinator
- Observe, Record and Report

R Respond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock
 E Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset
 C Confidentiality should not be promised to children or to adults
 O Observe carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the person expressing concern
 R Record in detail what you have seen and heard (handwritten is fine)
 D Do NOT interrogate or enter into detailed investigations. Encourage the child to say what he or she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

And then REPORT to the Child Protection Coordinator on the same day as the concern arises.

****Seek Help from the Child Protection Coordinator**.**

Information should be reported *immediately* to protect the member of Staff and the pupil. (If the Child Protection Coordinator is involved, contact Sarah Mannion as CP02). The Child Protection Coordinators, (possibly in consultation with the Housemaster or Housemistress), will decide whether/what further steps should be taken. The first point of referral is the local Social Work Department Office. The duty Social Worker will, if necessary, inform Police and the Reporter to the Children's Hearing.

Decisions concerning when parents are informed will be made by the Social Work Department (not the school or staff).

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Coordinator to ensure that:

- The pupil is reassured and supported at all stages.
- All concerned parties are kept informed of subsequent decisions and action.

When the complexity or urgency of need requires coordinated intervention from more than one service or agency, it is crucial that a lead professional is identified to take on

that coordinating role. A 'child's plan' should be developed. The partners involved in supporting the child need to agree which professional takes on the lead professional role, coordinating a multi-agency child's plan. The lead professional can be drawn from any of the services or agencies which are partners to the child's plan.

If a child is in immediate/urgent/imminent danger, police can be called.

RECORDING and SHARING INFORMATION - Getting it right for every child at Ardvreck.

1. Are you concerned by a pupil's behaviour - use the school behaviour policy if required. Discuss with the Deputy Head.
2. Is it a wellbeing issue?
 - a) Yes? Then complete 'Pastoral notes' online to record the FACTS and note the Action you have taken to discuss/resolve/deal with it and whether parents/other members of staff were informed. Ongoing needs should become part of the Child's wellbeing plan. Ongoing support may be needed. Interventions should be recorded/noted.
3. Is it a Child Protection issue?
 - b) Yes? Alert the CPO at once. Complete the Child Protection form on Engage or find a CPO and explain. Use paper and pen to record information/facts only and verbatim if possible; sign and date. DO NOT discuss with other members of staff. This is now a *highly confidential* matter. Online recording is also confidential and only CPOs will be able to see what was written.

CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sets a high standard for consent and, in most cases where there are child protection concerns, consent is unlikely to be an appropriate lawful basis to rely upon as it requires that individuals have real choice and control about the processing of their personal data. Relying on 'consent' as the lawful basis is not appropriate if, for example, refusal to give consent would prejudice a criminal investigation or might lead to serious harm to the child. Furthermore, due to the power imbalance between a child or families and the authorities, it would be difficult to demonstrate that consent was freely given. In matters of child protection, it is therefore likely that reliance on consent would be the exception and not the rule.

Where there may be a child protection concern, information may be lawfully shared without the need for consent to be obtained from the individual(s) to whom the information relates. Record what will be/has been shared, with whom, and why.

The following considerations will be helpful to support relevant, proportionate, timely, safe and effective information sharing.

- If there is evidence that a child is at risk of significant harm, relevant information can be shared with a statutory agency without delay. Consent is not required or appropriate

because the information must be shared in order to protect the child. Consent should only be sought when the individual has a real choice over the matter. However, where appropriate, agreement and understanding about the sharing of information may be helpful in engaging individuals in the process

- the needs, feelings, views and wishes of the child should be taken into account, and documented. They may also need additional support to understand and communicate
- information sharing decisions must be based not only upon considerations about the safety and wellbeing of the individual, but also the safety of others
- information can be shared without consent if, for example, a practitioner is unable to gain consent from the individual in time to prevent risk of harm, or if gaining consent could place a child at risk
- relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if, for example, it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or psychological harm. This must be done in a way that complies with the relevant areas of law such as data protection, human rights and confidentiality
- in all circumstances, it is important to be transparent with children and families so that they know what information is to be shared or has been shared and in what circumstances. In certain exceptional circumstances, it may not be appropriate to advise the individual that information is to be shared
- children and their families should also be aware that they can challenge whether sharing information is proportionate
- a record should be made of the reasons and considerations that informed the decision to share the information. If, where there is a possible child protection concern, a decision is made not to share information, consider:
 - what are the reasons for deciding not to share information?
 - what harm could result if this information is not shared?
 - what are the possible risks for the child or young person or for others if information is not shared and how serious could those risks be? Reasons for not sharing should be recorded.

Article 12 of the UNCRC must inform the approach to participation of children in child protection processes. This makes no restrictive presumption about age.

There is no age limit on the right of the child to express their views. Practitioners must not begin with the assumption that a child is incapable of expressing her or his own views, but rather presume that a child has the capacity to form their own views and recognise that she or he has the right to express them. Advocacy, translation or communication support may be needed.

Ardvreck School will work in partnership with parents in order to promote the welfare of their children. The School also aims to build up relationships of trust with children. Children and parents should feel able to raise with the School concerns about safety and welfare in the knowledge that these will be dealt with sensitively.

Confidentiality should not be promised to children or their parents when they share their concerns; in circumstances of serious risk a staff member is obliged to pass on information to the CPC. The School must pass on information when legally obliged to do so. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis.

Anything imparted in confidence to one member of Staff (or person approached as an associate of the School), may be shared with a restricted number of colleagues if that person feels in need of support and guidance from them.

If serious concerns are raised about the safety or welfare of a child, the person approached would, in terms of the School's Child Protection procedures, pass this information on to the Child Protection coordinator for consideration. A decision would be made as to whether it should be shared with the appropriate authorities. In these circumstances, the person approached would, (except in exceptional circumstances), inform the relevant people and make it known that this would happen.

Children must feel able to share concerns with staff. Problems may arise when a child consults a member of Staff about a problem but does not want that information to be shared with parents. Whilst Staff will encourage children to share information with parents where that is appropriate, there may be circumstances where any pressure to share the information with parents/family could result in the child keeping the problem to him or herself or not sharing concerns in the future. Therefore, professional judgement should be used.

Confidentiality Statement for Pupils

Pupils are given the following advice:

- If you have something important – you may wish to share/talk to Staff
- If you are worried about things that are happening to you
- If you need help or need to know how to seek help
- If you are worried about confidentiality/who will find out

The Staff are here to listen and to help. They may need to share some of the information with others if they are concerned about your safety but, if so, they will tell you first.

Problem, Suggestion or Complaint

If you have a problem, suggestion or complaint about any aspect of your treatment at Ardvreck, in the first instance you should speak to your Tutor, Teacher, Housemaster or Housemistress, - or any other member of Staff. They will listen to you without judgement and support you.

STAFF GUIDANCE ON INTERACTION WITH PUPILS

Physical Touch

The climate of suspicion that has developed with regard to child abuse poses a real dilemma for caring adults. This is true in all schools but especially so in boarding situations where schools take pride in fostering a family atmosphere. In order to protect children from abuse, and staff from suspicions of abuse, the natural inclinations to comfort and reassure children through physical contact needs a considered assessment of the situation. This does not mean that physical contact is never permissible. It does mean that adults touching children appropriately must operate within understood limits.

Where those limits lie will vary according to the age of the child and the role of the member of staff. A young child in a boarding situation may well require to be comforted and reassured. Any touching or comforting should be age appropriate, context specific,

preferably done within sight of others and prompted by the needs of the child, not those of the staff.

One would expect the need for such contact with older pupils, especially day pupils, to be considerably less, although even in these circumstances situations could arise in which it would be a natural and human occurrence. The death of a pupil, for example, might make it natural for pupils and teachers to grieve together and touching would be neither unusual nor undesirable, so long as it was agreeable to both parties, and limited.

It would be impossible to lay down rigid rules about what is, and what is not, permissible. Awareness-raising through in-service training should provide opportunities for staff to explore acceptable limits through discussion of case scenarios, but it must be informed by common sense. The difficulty in laying down clear limits makes it all the more important that schools make every effort to ensure that all staff who have contact with pupils are carefully selected, regularly trained, and all have appropriate checks completed.

One-to-One Situations

Opportunities for abuse exist in all schools, especially boarding schools, and in one-to-one situations, e.g. tutorials, music lessons, one-to-one tuition, guidance interviews, sick rooms. The simplest advice would be to avoid being alone with a child or young person. However, for some staff this is unrealistic as the context of their job is teaching in one-to-one situations, e.g. Music Instructors/Learning support lessons. This may also prove difficult, especially in a boarding situation, where it might be seen as beneficial for a child to have some opportunity for one-to-one contact with an adult:

- Where one-to-one contact is appropriate, it should be timetabled and held with others around or within earshot or view of others (keep doors open where possible).
- Never have the door locked and, wherever possible maintain a gap/barrier (eg table) between you and the child.
- Another member of staff should be aware of any meeting and its purpose.
- If possible, doors that must be closed should have built-in windows.
- Do not meet pupils off school premises for personal reasons or invite them to your home.
- Most one-to-one meetings will be avoided, but where required, straightforward and uneventful. Where the meeting is difficult, fraught, tense, accusatory or the pupil becomes distressed, the adult must seek another pupil or member of staff for help, then record details and inform a senior manager of the incident.
- If in doubt about a meeting, agree that a colleague will be nearby/in the room in case help is needed.
- Excursions out of the school, especially residential stays, can provide opportunities for abuse. Care should be taken to ensure that there are sufficient adults to provide proper supervision and that appropriate risk assessment(s) have been carried out.

Physical Contact and Restraint

- Physical contact should only be for the purpose of care, instruction, health and safety, physical intervention or restraint.
- Avoid any physical 'horseplay' with a child, or any other actions another adult or child might misinterpret, no matter how innocent or well-intentioned the actions might be.
- Staff should always be able to justify resorting to physical contact in any situation.
- The nature of the contact should be limited to what is appropriate and proportionate.

- Where possible, initial responses should be to de-escalate and divert before considering physical intervention or restraint. Staff should avoid restraining a child by putting their hands on a child's joints. Where possible another member of staff should be summoned to witness and give support. As soon as the child is under control, staff should cease any physical contact. All incidents of physical intervention or restraint should be logged, dated and signed in a log kept for that purpose. (see Safe Handling Policy)
- The use of physical restraint on a child should involve the absolute minimum force reasonable to the situation and is only permissible when certain that a child is at imminent risk of endangering themselves or others (or in extreme circumstances of inflicting damage to property).

'Hands on' Educational Instruction

'Hands on' educational instructions/support should only be used when verbal or role-modelling is insufficient or it is necessary for health and safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done within earshot, and preferably within view of others. Where 'hands on' is necessary you should seek the young person's permission appropriate to their age and level of understanding and explain to them what you are about to do. "Can I hold your arm to show you the position you need?"

Verbal Remarks

Positive relationships between staff and children often involve warmth and humour but staff should be aware that there can be a narrow line between remarks which an adult perceives as fair and humorous, but which can be hurtful and embarrassing to a child. Salacious or demeaning remarks should never be made to, or in the presence of, children and young people. Remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development, or suggestive or derogatory comments could fall into this category. Staff should avoid making comparisons to a child or 'picking on' particular children.

Communication via Technology and Social Media

Any communication via technology with pupils should be in line with school policy, for educational purposes and approved by the senior management of the school. A teacher can be vulnerable to unintended misuse of electronic communication. E-mail, texting and social media encourage casual dialogue and very often, innocent actions can easily be misconstrued or manipulated. A teacher should never share information with pupils in any environment that they would not willingly or appropriately share in a school or school-related setting.

Attachments

In circumstances where you or a member of staff's relationship with, or feelings towards, a child or young person are at risk of being construed as 'unprofessional behaviour', seek advice and support from your line manager. If it seems that a young person is becoming inappropriately attached to you or to another member of staff or volunteer or adult helper, share your concerns and seek advice from your line manager.

Climate and 'Whistle Blowing'

In working with children and young people, it is possible for staff, through ill-considered actions, to lay themselves open to allegations of abuse. Their best protection is to encourage a climate of openness within the classroom and school community, where pupils feel confident to point out aspects of behaviour they do not like. If another member of staff is seen to behave inappropriately with a child, do not ignore it but share

it with the Child Protection Coordinator. If the concern is about the Child Protection Coordinator it should be reported to the Head and if it is about the Head it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

Inappropriate or Abusive Behaviour

The list below is presented to show some of the ways in which inappropriate behaviour or abuse may be manifested. It is important to recognise that this list is neither definitive nor exhaustive, nor is it meant to suggest that all the actions below are in themselves abusive: they must be seen in the context of the interaction with the child and the intention of staff. Staff should bear these in mind as a way of minimising risk and encouraging good practice. Staff must always exercise professional judgement in each circumstance.

Physical

- Hitting/tapping
- Pushing/jabbing
- Throwing missiles
- Shaking/grabbing

Emotional

- Inappropriate/systematic sarcasm
- Isolating e.g. locked room
- Unfavourable comparisons with others
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Scapegoating
- Systematic personal criticism

Sexual

- Any sexual activity with a pupil
- Inappropriate touching/comforting
- Suggestive remarks or gestures
- Sexual harassment
- Indecent materials
- Grooming a child for abuse

Staff should make sure to understand the issues of boundaries and safety when working with children and if they have any concerns should raise this with the Child Protection Coordinator.

All staff and two Governors receive yearly training in Child Protection, Safeguarding and Wellbeing. Sarah Mannion and Peter Grant have received further detailed training and Sarah Mannion trains the whole school staff at INSET days and updates given during whole School Meetings.

All Staff are required to read/sign to indicate they understand and agree with this policy. All Staff are required to complete yearly Child Protection updates at appropriate levels.

Useful Numbers:

Care Inspectorate 01382 207200

National Child Protection Helpline: 0800 1111

CONTACTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS

Perth and Kinross: 01738 476768

Family Protection Unit Perth and Kinross: 01738 892912

Grampian:

- Laurencekirk 01561 378333
- Stonehaven 01569 763800

Tayside:

- Perth and Kinross 01738 476700
- Dundee 01382 667360

Angus:

- Montrose 01674 672702
- Forfar 01307 462405
- Arbroath 01241 878585

Central:

- Stirling 01786 471177 (emergency 01786 470500)
- Falkirk 01324 506400
- Clackmannan 01259 452351

Fife

- East Fife 01593 644602
- West Fife 01383 312910

Specific Concerns.

For further information on the following please refer to other Ardvreck School Policy documents or the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (with errata 2022 and updates 2023.)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/>

Protection of pupils learning differences
Protection of disabled children
Parents with learning disabilities
Mental Health/wellbeing – impact on children
Children experiencing mental health difficulties
Suicide/self harm affecting children
Children/families affected by drug/alcohol abuse
Domestic abuse
Restraint/safe handling
Obesity/concerns about risk of harm
Child sexual abuse
Child sexual Exploitation
Indecent images/internet enabled sexual offending by adults
Children who display harmful sexual behaviour
Child protection in the digital environment
Under age sexual activity
Children who are looked after away from home
Children who are missing
Protecting unaccompanied/asylum seeking/trafficked children
Child trafficking and criminal exploitation
Protection in transitional phases
Bullying
Hate crimes
Serious harmful behaviour
Vulnerability – drawn towards terrorism
Female Genital mutilation
Honour based abuse/forced marriage
Fabricated or induced illness
Sudden/unexpected death of child/infant
Cultural/faith communities
Children/families in the defence community
Child protection in the context of disaster or public emergency
Historical (non recent) reports of abuse

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT FOR PARENTS

The School's Child Protection Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policy has been developed in response to the Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014 and is based upon the latest guidance from SCIS (2019) and National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updates 2023).

The guidelines advise us that our responsibility to the children in our care requires us to inform the Child Protection Coordinator (or the Head of Pastoral Care in their absence) of any report of abuse to a child, whether physical, sexual or emotional, whether this has been reported to us by the child or a third party or if we have reason to suspect abuse.

It is the policy of the Board of Governors that the school adheres to the procedures and policies stated in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023), SCIS Guidance on Wellbeing and Child Protection 2019 edition and the School's

Pastoral Care is line with GIRFEC (Getting it right for Every Child), the Early Years Framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and builds on the Children's Charter 2004.

The Headmaster at Ardvreck is the School's Child Protection Coordinator (if the Headmaster is unavailable a report should be made to the Head of pupil Welfare who is also trained in Child Protection, or in their absence to the Deputy Head Teacher or the Head of Boarding).

The Named Person.

Every effort will be made to have one point of contact if a Child Protection case were to arise.

Normal procedure at Ardvreck School: the Child Protection Coordinator would take advice from Social Services as to whether the case should be reported in the first instance, and, if a report has to be made, to be open with parents, if possible. The Child Protection Coordinator has established contact with the local Social Services, so that she knows who will be able to help should advice be needed. At all times, matters should be treated as confidentially as possible with information shared strictly on a 'need to know' basis.

All members of staff are aware of their responsibility to report any suspected case of abuse.

Each member of staff remains accountable for their own practice and must adhere to their own professional guidelines, standards and codes of professional conduct. Staff at all levels in all services, including Third Sector and private sector services, should have information, advice and training to make them aware of potential risks to children; and to support their knowledge and confidence about steps they might take to keep children safe.

For further information please refer to the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/08/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/documents/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf>

Updated: September 2026 by Peter Grant/Sarah Mannion.