



**Getting it Right
in Perth and Kinross**
Helping children be the best they can be

Child Protection and GIRFEC Update for all school staff

June 2022



**PERTH &
KINROSS
COUNCIL**

Securing the future... • *Improving services*
• *Enhancing quality of life* • *Making the best use of public resources*

Intended learning

Staff will...

- ❖ Understand the continuum of concern from GIRFEC and wellbeing to Child Protection and risk of harm
- ❖ Understand the role of the key staff within school in relation to concerns
- ❖ Consider risks indicators in relation to particular forms of abuse
- ❖ Understand the responsibility of all to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns



Why a Child Protection and GIRFEC update?

It is important that all practitioners understand these responsibilities:

- their duties of care
- the relationship between **Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)** and **Child Protection**
- the respective key language / terminology
- the levels and pathways of intervention and when each approach applies.

Intervention Guidelines 2017



GIRFEC Principles



The Wellbeing Indicators



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Safe
Healthy
Achieving
Nurtured
Active
Respected
Responsible
Included



Wellbeing is multi-dimensional. A child or young person's wellbeing in relation to one indicator may impact on and interact with their wellbeing in relation to other indicators. Each child and young person is unique and there is no set level of wellbeing that children should achieve.

So what is 'a concern'?

Amongst other things, a concern might be...



a worry




a disclosure



a response




a change



a gut feeling

What to do about a concern



If you have a concern about wellbeing, then share that with the child's Named Person

If your concern relates to harm or risk of harm, then pass that concern to your school Child Protection Officer

When does a concern become Child Protection?

Child Protection does not sit separately from wellbeing. Child Protection is about protecting a child from abuse or neglect and preventing the risk of them coming to significant harm.

Harm can result from one specific incident, a series of incidents, or an accumulation of low-level concerns over a period of time.

Abuse or neglect does not have to have occurred; it is sufficient that an assessment has identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm.



What is your role in Child Protection?



All staff have a crucial role to play in protecting children and young people.

Children and young people who have a disclosure to make will choose who they disclose to.

It could be any staff member in the school so all members of staff need to be aware of Child Protection and how to respond to disclosures.

[Responding to a Child's Disclosure of Abuse | NSPCC L YouTube](#)



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What might some of the signs be...

- takes risks
- obsessive
- changes in eating habits
- irrational
- reluctant to change for PE
- Self-harming
- hungry
- talking about death or suicidal ideation
- angry or aggressive
- sleep problems
- withdrawn
- behaviour changes
- disengaged
- absences or missing from school
- lack of focus
- anxious, depressed mood
- clingy
- poor hygiene
- reluctant to go home
- sexualised language/behaviour
- tearful
- sore bits / bruises

Neglect

Neglect is considered the most common form of child abuse.

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

- [NSPCC 'We're Here', Neglect subtitled - YouTube](#)

Additional vulnerabilities

The vulnerability of some children has increased because of the additional pressures resulting from the Covid-19 outbreak.

- Many have suffered loss and have had to manage the grief process during the restrictions, and without usual support networks.
- Some children have been at risk of, or may have suffered, harm and neglect, where that would not otherwise have been the case.
- Some children and young people have been exposed to more risks online.
- Families have suffered the impact of poverty caused by challenges to the economy, and the increased cost of living.

Covid-19 Vulnerability

- Lockdown may have created new risks to women and children experiencing or recovering from domestic violence. It may also have created circumstances where instances of domestic abuse and coercive control have increased in frequency.
- For vulnerable children already experiencing poor mental health, any number of risk factors – including, for example, fear and anxiety associated with Coronavirus itself, and the pressures of isolation in homes that may be over-crowded and lack outdoor space, may have had a significant impact upon them.
- Additional pressures placed upon families may have led to a deterioration in the mental health of parent/carer, or to increased alcohol consumption or drug use.

Covid-19 Vulnerability

We may not be aware of the difficulties that have been faced by children and young people during the pandemic and the impact these experiences may have had.



Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

When mental health becomes a concern, it can impact negatively across all GIRFEC wellbeing indicators. Any resources allocated to support mental health should be considered as a suicide prevention and child protection intervention ([Steve Sweeney, Ssweeney@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:Ssweeney@pkc.gov.uk))

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/embed/video/b777b1c9-e065-4f4c-a0b0-e9a38234c4b0?autoplay=false&showinfo=true>

[Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention on Vimeo](#)

[How to talk about Mental Health on Vimeo](#)

Contacting who, when

(involve parents unless a CP concern indicates not doing so)



Agency	When
999 - Emergency services	Injury occurring, Police if about to harm or run off and likely to harm
GP	GP hours – serious risk of harm
NHS 24 and NHS 111	Out of hours – serious risk of harm
CAMHS	Currently open to CAMHS and Daytime working hours
Child Protection Duty Team	If concerned about home ability to keep safe
ECS centre (QIO team on Schoolimprovement@pkc.gov.uk or EP ECSPsychologists@pkc.gov.uk or 476242)	Unsure how to proceed

What do I do if a child tells me about harm or abuse to them?

Stay calm and don't let your reactions show.

Listen carefully, using body language to encourage the child to keep talking.

If necessary check understanding by repeating their words or using a phrase such as "so you are saying..."

Do not promise confidentiality. Share the concern **immediately**, with a CPO in line with school policy.

Write down what has been said, verbatim, as soon as is possible; sign and date the record

If no one is available, and the concern is serious, call PKC Child Protection Duty Team on: 01738 476768.

If you can't reach that team, and feel that a child is in immediate danger then, without delay, report that concern directly to the police.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION!



Child Concern Detailed Record

Staff member - name			
Staff member - position			
Name of child/ young person		Class	
Date of birth			
Date of concern / incident		Time	
Child's Named Person			

Outline of concern / incident *(including any questions asked and any replies given)*

Action or decision taken

Signed		Role		Date	
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Does confidentiality ever prevent me sharing a **child protection concern**?

No. Where a concern relates to child protection, information should always be shared.

Consent is not required and should not be sought.

If you are unsure, always seek advice from the Child Protection Officer.



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Remember...

- Almost all children and young people are well cared for.
- Some children may be at risk of **harm**. This can happen in a family, online without contact, by someone the child or young person knows, or by a stranger.
- Staff in schools are exploring and adapting to new ways of interacting and engaging with children and young people. Online and offline vigilance, along with knowledge of key processes and procedures is key to ensuring children and young people are protected.



Child Protection

- It is vital that all members of staff know who the schools' Child Protection Officers are and pass information on to them immediately if it **may** be a Child Protection matter.
- The 2021 National Guidance for Child Protection is being looked at and procedures will change in line with this. You can read more about the new Guidance here: [Supporting documents - National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/06/Supporting_documents_-_National_guidance_for_child_protection_in_Scotland_2021.pdf)
- For more information on PKC procedures and paperwork, see: [ECS Child Protection Guidance and Procedures \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

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CPO Mentors

The CPO Mentors are available for support:

- Jo White (Letham Primary)
- Laura Knoyle (COPEEC)
- Lorna Mair (Pitlochry)
- Angela Thomson (Burrelton)
- Pauline Smith (Kinross Primary)
- Sharon Forbes (Oakbank)
- Nicola Tyrrell (Aberuthven)

- Christine Couser (Bertha Park)
- Senga Morran (Kinross High)

NEW SECONDARY CPO MENTORS WOULD BE WELCOMED 😊

ACRA (Age of Criminal Responsibility Act 2019)

The Age of Criminal Responsibility has changed from **8** to **12**.

This will affect how Police treat younger children and is an evidence-based approach.

There will still have been a crime committed, and there may still be a victim being offered support. It is likely that action will still need to be taken in relation to the crime. The approach will be different, as the child will be offered extra support to avoid being involved with the Police in the future, and will not be charged or attend a legal Hearing.

For more information:

Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019: child interview rights practitioners – code of practice - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)