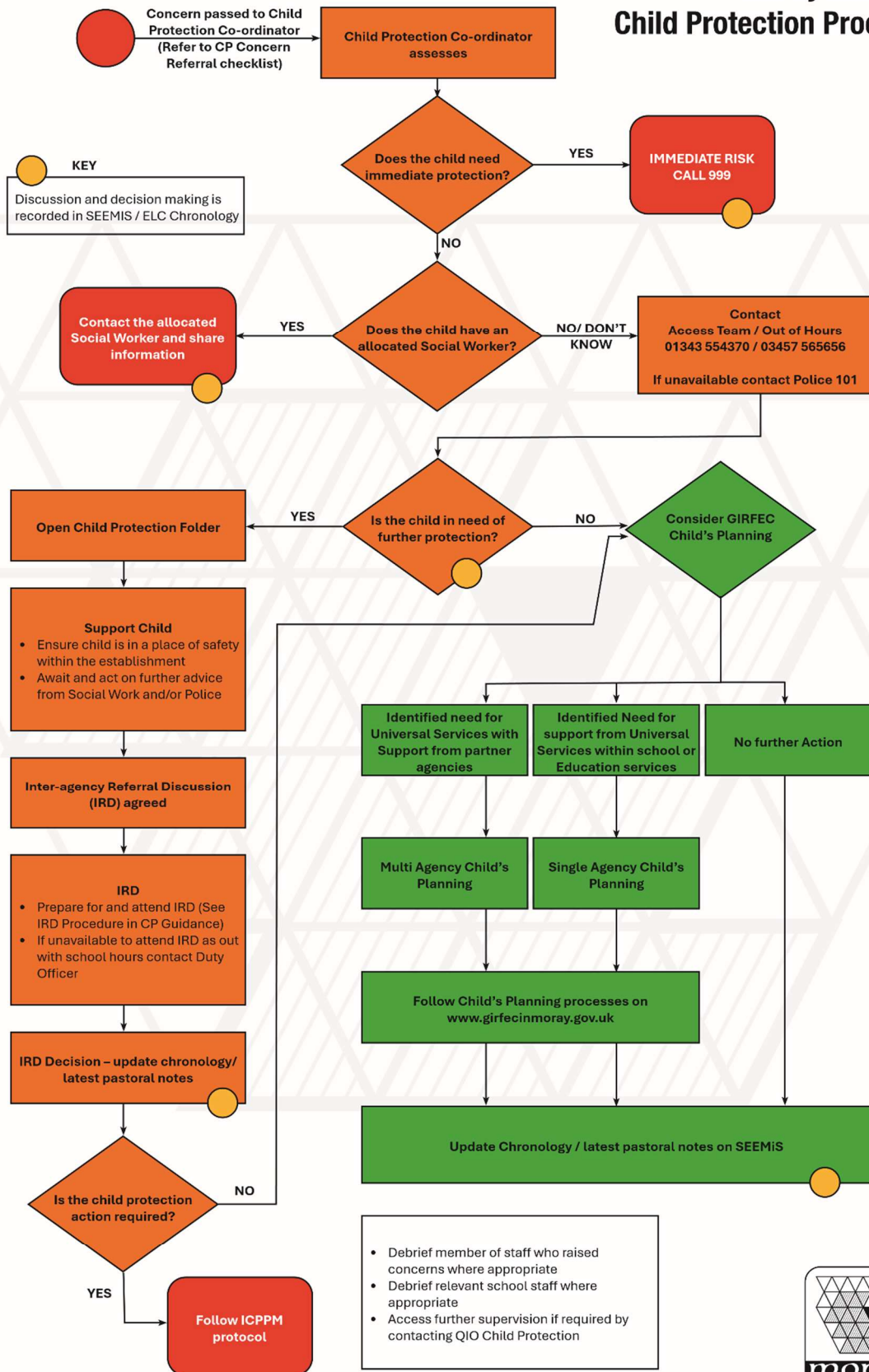


Version	Date
1	05/25
2	08/25
3	11/25



# Education Child Protection Procedures

# Moray Council Child Protection Process



## **Principles Underpinning Moray's School Child Protection Procedure**

***Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.***

*(United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child)*

The Moray Approach to child protection is based upon the protection of children's rights and our commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by embracing the GIRFEC approach and Staged Intervention Model. This requires a continuum of preventative and protective work. The following themes are recurrent throughout this policy:

- **Attention to the child's needs, rights, voice and experience is fundamental.** This requires recognition of risk of harm to a child; risk of harm to others from a child; and recognition of the context in which such risks occur.
- **Recognition and engagement with family** entails attention to the needs, strengths, perspective and experience of those family members who are key to the child's safety and wellbeing.
- **Information sharing** that is protective must be relevant, proportionate, accurate, timely, necessary, and lawful.
- **Multi-disciplinary assessment of risk and strength** should be structured and formed in collaboration between professionals, child and family. It should include analysis of what needs to change to prevent harm to the child, through the consideration of the interaction of factors that may help or hinder change.
- **Co-ordinated and collaborative planning** requires agreed steps, expectations, responsibilities, outcomes, supports and timescales. Strength-based approaches may assist in bringing professionals and family together in shared objectives.
- **Practical help** that is responsive to need also involves qualities in professional relationship, including reliability, honesty, respect, care, accessibility and encouragement.
- **Workforce:** effective child protection depends on sufficient training in core knowledge, skills and values applicable to role, the supervision, support and leadership that sustains ethical practice, and a learning culture that integrates learning from mistakes.

[\(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023\)](#)

Revisions have been informed by the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023](#) and [Support and Protection of Young People in Moray](#),

It also reflects recent legislative, policy and practice developments, including (but not limited to):

- [The Promise](#)
- [Secure Care: Pathway and Standards](#)
- [Getting it right for every child](#)
- [Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#);
- [Protection of Children \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#);
- [Children's Hearing \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#);
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) and its most recent, [2020 statutory guidance](#);
- [Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#);
- [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Trauma-informed practice](#)

## **Child Protection - Definition**

*"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 Procedures 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".*

*(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021(updated 2023))*

The [National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2021 \(updated 2023\)](#) advises that "all staff working in education establishments, including early learning and childcare settings, have a key role in the support and protection of children. Day-to-day professional experience of, and relationship with children is a fundamental protective factor". (p45)

The Child Protection Guidance applies to children and young people up to the age of 18.

## **Child Protection Training and Information Protocol**

It is the responsibility of all staff in a school to familiarise themselves with their individual School Child Protection Practitioner's Handbook (Appendix 2). This should be read by every member of staff yearly after completing the mandatory training.

Every school will undertake training for child protection for all staff on a yearly basis. Further sessions should be arranged for absent staff or for staff who join the school during the academic year. New members of staff/regular supply staff must also have child protection training as part of their induction programme.

Every staff member will be issued a Child Protection Lanyard (Appendix 3) that outlines the child protection procedures and provides the names and contact details of the school's Child Protection Co-ordinators. All visitors to the school must also be issued with a **Child Protection Lanyard** upon arrival and informed of the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator and depute to ensure they are aware of who to contact should they have any concerns.

Designated Child Protection Co-ordinators and their identified deputies will participate in annual training sessions held in May/June. This training is designed to equip them with the necessary knowledge and confidence to deliver the mandatory whole-school Child Protection session in August. An updated presentation will be provided each year to reflect current national and local guidance (Appendix 4). Termly Child Protection Induction training will be provided for anyone who is newly appointed as the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator or depute. (appendix 5)

The Child Protection Co-ordinator Network will convene once per term. These meetings will serve as a forum for sharing key updates, developments, and changes in child protection practice and legislation at both the local and national levels.

Further training in Child Protection is available to schools through the Moray Learning & Development Group. Training opportunities will be advertised via the briefing, the [Moray Child Protection webpage](#) and the [Protecting People in Moray](#) website. For further information the [National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2024](#) provides a multi-agency learning and development resource clarifying required child protection competencies to support collaborative, effective, and trauma-informed practice.

## **Child Protection Concerns**

### **Reporting a Concern, Multi-agency Decision Making and Planning**

When a concern is reported, the Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) must establish and consider as much of the following information as possible before contacting the Access Team/Police. Please also see Child Protection Concern Referral Checklist (Appendix 6) for support:

- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location
- Child's current location and emotional and physical condition
- Whether the child needs immediate protection. **CALL 999**
- Full names, date of birth, gender of child(ren)
- Family address
- Identity of those with Parental Rights and Responsibilities
- Names and date of birth of all household members and any known regular visitors to the household
- Details of child's extended family or community who are significant for the child
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of children and parents/carers
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other communication aid
- Any special needs of child(ren) and other household members
- Details of any alleged perpetrators (if relevant)
- Known current or previous involvement of other agencies/professionals
- Information regarding parental knowledge of, and agreement to, the referral

### **Informing Parents and Carers**

The primary aim of all child protection procedures is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Decisions regarding when, how, and by whom parents or carers are informed of a concern must always be discussed and agreed upon with Social Work and/or Police Scotland as part of the referral process. School staff, including the Child Protection Co-ordinator, should not contact parents or carers before this discussion has taken place. Premature contact could compromise a child's safety or any subsequent investigation.

### **Managing Allegations or Concerning Information About Staff/Whistleblowing**

All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against them or an allegation is made to them concerning the behaviour of another member of staff, volunteer, or visitor. If a child protection concern involves a member of staff/volunteer, it must be treated with the **same level of seriousness and urgency** as any other disclosure made by a child or young person. The **Child Protection Co-ordinator must immediately contact the Access Team** and notify the **Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) with responsibility for Child Protection**. A **dynamic risk assessment** must be conducted without delay to assess any immediate risks to children and young people. To ensure the safety of all parties and uphold the integrity of any investigation, the staff member against whom the allegation has been made may be assigned to **alternative duties** or placed on **restricted duties** until a full investigation is completed. (Appendix 7)

#### **What if a member of staff/volunteer has a concern about a colleague or trusted adult?**

When staff have concerns about another adult's behaviour, **whistleblowing** is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. It is important you understand Moray's [Whistleblowing \(Confidential Reporting\) Policy](#) and who you talk to you if you have a concern about another adult.

### **Don't think "What if I'm wrong?" think "What if I'm right?"**

Where a child protection concern is shared with the Access Team or police, they will advise the next course of action, and this decision should be logged on SEEMIS.

Where there is **no indication of significant harm**, the following actions may be agreed:

- **CPC may be asked to seek further information** from the child or young person who has made the disclosure and report back to Access Team/police
- No further action, provision of information and/or advice and signposting
- Continue with current support measures for the child or family
- Named person to co-ordinate a Child Planning Meeting
- Social Work to initiate an Initial Assessment of Need

Where **risk of significant harm** is identified, the following actions may be appropriate:

- Hold an Inter-agency referral discussion (IRD) to share information and agree next steps including the creation of a safety plan to reduce the risk of harm to the child
- Emergency safety plans or legal measures to protect a child i.e. providing accommodation for the child with parental consent or a Child Protection Order

### **Inter-Agency Referral Discussion (IRD)**

Where a referral is made to Social Work in relation to a Child Protection concern, the Moray Inter-Agency Referral (IRD) Procedure should be followed accordingly ([Support and Protection of Children and Young People in Moray, pp22](#)). IRDs are applicable to a child or young person up to the age of 18 years. The decision to convene an IRD can be made by Police, Health or Social Work. A request to hold an IRD can, however, be made by any agency. An IRD is initiated where it is suspected that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at risk of suffering significant harm or abuse in relation to familial and non-familial concerns, and of siblings and other children. It is the start of the formal process for information sharing, assessment, analysis and decision making to ascertain risk. They explain the concerns, risks and protective factors. Education staff must attend with all the relevant information. An IRD Preparation Form has been developed to support education staff who attend IRD's. (Appendix 8)

***"Education is a critical source of contextual information about each child of nursery or school age."***  
(National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021-updated 2023)

An IRD is a multi-agency Child Protection discussion and attendance by all agencies should be treated as a priority. Non-attendance should be in exceptional circumstances only. **If the Child Protection Co-ordinator, the depute or another suitable representative from the school are unable to attend, you must alert the Duty Officer immediately so a central officer can be identified and attend in their absence.** When possible, a central officer will attend during holiday periods.

During an IRD, participants will consider and identify a range of actions to undertake on a multi-agency basis which can culminate in the following two ways:

- 1) **No further child protection action** is required, including:
  - No intervention is required
  - Single agency support is required (which may include measures currently in place)
  - Multi-agency support is required such as the introduction or continuation of Child Planning activity

- 2) **Continuation of child protection procedures** may be appropriate to safeguard the child in the short term, to find out more information about the level of risk or harm or to build a long-term plan to safeguard the child. This can be achieved by:
- Interim safety planning – what needs to happen to keep the child safe?
  - Joint investigation (Joint Investigative Interview (JII)/Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), Age of criminal responsibility (ACRA) Investigative interview, Medical Examination, Child Protection Investigation)
  - Child Protection Planning Meeting
  - Referral to the Children's Reporter
  - Emergency legal measures (police powers to remove a child/young person; child protection order; child assessment order; exclusion order)
  - Other legal measures (e.g. referral to Secure Care Screening Panel).

This means that the IRD *process* is not usually complete at the end of the formal IRD *meeting*; IRDs continue to be an inter-agency process up until a decision is made that:

- A Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) is held, or the case is moving to protection from serious harm process
- a PPM/Protection from Serious Harm meeting is not required (because there is no need for protective actions)

### **Escalation**

If any agency involved in the IRD disagrees with the decision of any party and where an agreement cannot be reached, the [Multiagency Escalation Procedure applies](#) (starting from stage 3). The points of disagreement and resolution must be recorded on the IRD Record. There should be no delays in protective action as a result of the disagreement, and the majority decision will apply to avoid delay beyond 24 hours.

An IRD can be reconvened if new information arises which could lead to the reconsideration of the original inter-agency response. A reconvened IRD meeting could bring the multi-agency back together in the form of a meeting if the information needs further consideration or analysis; alternatively, it may be that a reasonable decision is made and can be agreed by the partner agencies via email or phone conversation. The latter option (discussions via email and calls) may be particularly appropriate where it is agreed that any new information would not have an impact on multiagency decisions.

### **The Voice of Children and Families**

The views of the child or young person, as well as those of their family, should be central to all child protection processes. Wherever possible, schools should make every effort to seek and record these views prior to any child protection planning meetings or core group discussions. It is also essential that staff are open and transparent about their professional assessments and ensure these are clearly communicated with the family.

#### **Key messages for Child protection meetings or referrals:**

- the views of children and their families must be clearly recorded and considered. This includes those who are non-verbal due to age or disability; in such cases, observations of behaviours can substitute spoken or written views.
- Children, young people and families always have a choice in how their views are shared (e.g., in writing, pictures, etc.).
- It should be clearly recorded if a child/young person or family member are unable to provide their views, alongside the ways that gathering perspectives was attempted.



## **Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM)**

Child Protection Planning Meetings are convened as a result of a decision at an IRD or from the recommendation of a Child Protection Investigation:

- Initial CPPMs are held within 28 days of the notification of the concern
- All professionals are required to share their report with the family, the Children's Reviewing Team and other agencies, **5 working days** prior to the meeting. To support education staff in completing these reports, a **suggested report framework** has been developed (Appendix 9). This framework includes a section for practitioners to record their professional judgement or decision at the time of writing
- All professionals are required to prepare for the CPPM by reading the shared reports and considering their agency's contribution to the plan
- CPPMs are solution oriented, which means that the focus is on the development of a plan which addresses concerns and builds on contextual strengths, rather than the recounting of incidents
- At the end of a PPM, a child/young person is either not placed, placed/retained or removed from the **Child Protection Register (CPR)**. CPR is a central register (administrative system) of all children and young people, including unborn children, who are the subject of a multiagency protection plan due to protection concerns. There is 24-hour access to the CPR for all practitioners, services/agencies who need to make an enquiry about a child or young person. The CPR can be accessed by emailing the team keeping the register (**[northeastcpr@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:northeastcpr@aberdeencity.gov.uk)**).
- The Reviewing Officer (chair) of the meeting will decide if a child or young person is placed, removed or retained on the Child Protection Register. The child, their family and agency partners will continue to be able to contribute their views on the level of risk and whether child protection registration is required. The Reviewing Officer will detail the reasons for their decision.
- Where a child who is on the Child Protection Register moves local authority area, the receiving local authority is responsible for convening a transfer CPPM. This should be held within 21 working days of the transfer's receipt.
- A minimum of 2 Child Planning Meetings should be held within 6 months of the de-registration decision to monitor progress.

## **Core Groups**

Following registration, it is essential that agencies work together in a clear and focused manner to protect the child from the risk of future harm and to work to ensure they achieve their full potential:

- The Core Group must meet within 15 working days of a CPPM
- Core group meetings should subsequently be held every 4 weeks or more often (when, for example, the risks seem to be escalating). Where circumstances prevent a 4-week core group meeting being from being held, the time between meetings should never exceed 6 weeks.
- The core group will activate contingency plans promptly when progress is not made or circumstances deteriorate
- The core group will refer the need for any significant changes in the child protection plan to the Reviewing Officer within 3 calendar days, or as urgently as necessary to safeguard the child



### **Protection from Serious Harm (PfSH)**

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to initiate Moray's processes to protect young people and/or others from serious harm. This approach is based on the Scottish Government's guidance on Care and Risk Management. The process to protect young people from serious harm should be applied in circumstances where it is assessed that there is likelihood of serious harm occurring. Serious harm is defined by FRAME (Framework for Risk Assessment, Management and Evaluation) as follows:

"There is a likelihood of harmful behaviour, of a violent or sexual nature, which is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, may reasonably be expected to be difficult or impossible"

This includes risk of serious harm:

- Posed to the young person (e.g., exploitation by other people)
- To others by the young person (e.g., offending, violence, sexually harmful behaviour)
- Harm to self by the young person (i.e., serious incidents of self-harm/suicide attempts).

Concern regarding serious harm may emerge due to a single incident or be as part of a pattern of behaviour.

For further information about all of the above processes please refer to [Support and Protection of Young People in Moray](#).

### **Referral to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)**

The **Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)** is responsible for protecting children and young people in Scotland who may be at risk and ensuring their needs are met through the **Children's Hearings System**.

#### **Purpose of SCRA:**

- **To ensure the welfare of children and young people** who may need care or protection, or who have committed an offence
- **To receive referrals** about children and young people from various sources (e.g. police, social work, schools) where there are concerns about their safety, behaviour, or wellbeing
- **To investigate these referrals** and decide whether the child should be referred to a **Children's Hearing**, which is a legal meeting involving trained lay panel members
- **To support the Children's Hearings System** by providing administrative support and safeguarding the rights of the child throughout the process

A referral to SCRA should be made if you have concerns about the child's care or protection; the child's behaviour (e.g. offending, high-level non-attendance, substance misuse), and/or they are at risk of significant harm or unmet wellbeing needs. Where possible, this decision should be made in agreement with the **Team Around the Child (TAC)**. However, education staff may make a **single-agency referral** when appropriate—such as in cases of attendance concerns. If a **TAC** exists, education should inform all agencies of their intention to refer; if no **TAC** is in place, it is good practice to notify the **Access Team** before submitting the referral.

The **Request for Assistance** can be used to refer to the Children's Reporter which can be found on the GIRFEC website [Getting it Right for Every Child in Moray](#)

### **Referral to PREVENT Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP)**

The **Prevent** strategy is part of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy. It is focused on **safeguarding individuals from being drawn into terrorism or extremist ideologies** and ensuring they receive appropriate support.

Educational establishments have a statutory duty under the Prevent strategy to take steps to prevent learners from being radicalised or drawn into extremism; be alert to signs that a learner may be vulnerable to extremist narratives; respond swiftly and appropriately, in line with child protection and safeguarding procedures, and work in partnership with agencies such as Police

Scotland, Social Work, and the Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) to assess risk and provide support.

**If you identify a child or young person who is at risk of being drawn into terrorism or extremist ideologies, follow our standard child protection procedures.** In nurseries and all educational establishments, the Child Protection Co-ordinator is the Designated Prevent Duty Lead. In agreement with the Team Around the Child, you may be asked to complete a PREVENT National Referral Form. (Appendix 10a) You may also be asked to attend the PREVENT Multi-agency Panel (PMAP). (Appendix 10b)

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is a **multi-agency meeting** that brings together representatives from different services (such as police, health, education, social work, and domestic abuse support services) to **share information about high-risk cases of domestic abuse**. The aim is to **create a coordinated safety plan** to protect the victim and any children involved.

If there are children involved, the QIO (CP Lead) will notify the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will attend the 15-minute online meeting at their allocated time. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory. In preparation for the meeting the Child Protection Co-ordinator should consider the risks, protective factors and current supports in place for the identified child/children.

### **Transition – Child Protection to Adult Protection**

Robust procedures must be in place to ensure on-going support for any child about whom there are child protection concerns at the point they move from children into adult services. A child's plan should state whether the young person is potentially an adult at risk of harm who will require on-going support, services or statutory measures. Assessment and transition planning should start no later than **12 months before school leaving age**. Issues of consent are of particular significance here, as the young person may choose not to accept the services offered.

### **Learning Review**

A **Child Protection Learning Review** is called when:

- A child has died or been significantly harmed, and there are concerns about how professionals or services worked together to protect them
- There is learning to be gained that could improve future child protection practice, even if no mistakes were made
- The case is likely to have national significance or offer insights that could help improve systems or practice more broadly

In some Child Protection cases you may be asked to take part in a Learning Review. The overall purpose of a Learning Review is to bring together agencies, individuals and families in a collective endeavour to learn from what has happened in order to improve and develop systems and practice in the future and thus better protect children and young people. Learning Reviews are **not** investigations. They are an opportunity for in-depth analysis and critical reflection in order to gain greater understanding of inevitably complex situations and to develop strategies to support practice and improve systems across agencies.

### **Moray Multiagency Case Escalation**

The aim of the procedure is to provide clarity to practitioners within the partnership in terms of the ways of seeking support and oversight from senior staff when a case is complex and one or more professionals have identified an issue, such as:

- Practitioners involved in the case cannot reach consensus about case management and decisions, individual processes, procedures and practice
- One professional/agency believes that progress towards improved outcomes for a child is not achieved

### **Multi-Agency Reflective Case Discussion (RCD)**

Any practitioner from any of the partner agencies (Social Work, Police, Health, Education or Third Sector) can request a multi-agency reflective case discussion (RCD) following discussion and agreement with their line manager and the QIO (Child Protection Lead).

This process is as follows:

- Case is explored in single agency supervision or discussed with line manager or QIO (Child Protection Lead). Areas meriting further, multiagency exploration are identified. These can relate to the wellbeing or protection of any child or young person, regardless of legal status or age
- The practitioner/their first line manager discusses and agree the need for an RCD with the QIO (Child Protection Lead)
- Once an agreement about the need for an RCD has been reached:
  - The practitioner alerts the Team around the Child that an RCD has been requested
  - The practitioner/their first line manager completes the RCD form (Appendix 11) and sends it to the Independent Reviewing Team

### **Recording Child Protection Concerns**

All schools should ensure that their systems and processes are robust and serve to always keep children safe and well. The School Child Protection Procedures, the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 \(updated 2023\)](#) and [Support and Protection of Young People in Moray](#), should be highlighted, by school Senior Managers, to teaching and support staff regularly. Teaching and Support staff should ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to Child Protection matters and they are fully au fait with the School Child Protection process. (Appendix 1)

### **School Child Protection Folder**

A School Child Protection Folder (electronic and paper copy) should be available for all staff to access and must contain the following information:

- School Child Protection Practitioner's Handbook (Appendix 2)
- Child Protection Co-ordinator/Depute Child Protection Co-ordinator details
- Training Materials e.g. August Child Protection Power point with notes (Appendix 4)
- Standard information issued to new staff
- Standard Child Protection Lanyard for staff and visitors (Appendix 3)
- Further Reading – relevant policies, guidance etc.

The Child Protection Poster (Appendix 1b) should be displayed throughout all appropriate areas in the school and in **every** classroom. An updated Child Protection Flowchart (Appendix 1a) has been created to support Child Protection Co-ordinators.

### **Whole School Child Protection File**

Robust record keeping is essential. A **Child Protection File** should be kept by the Child Protection Co-ordinator in a secure locked cabinet or in a password protected electronic file. The following documents should be kept in this file:

- Child Protection Log (Appendix 12) - should contain the details of all children for whom a CP referral has been made
- Child Protection Access Log will ensure there is a clear record of who has accessed the secure cabinet and the reason for this (Appendix 13)
- Child Protection Training Log (Appendix 14) – staff must sign this when they have completed any child protection training
- Education Scotland Child Protection and Safeguarding Self Evaluation – to be completed and updated yearly. Contact QIO (CP Lead) for most up to date completed example

- Child Protection Quality Assurance and Evaluation and Q.I2.1 Health Check – best practice is to complete and update yearly. (Appendix 15a & 15b)

The Child Protection file should be updated on a yearly basis after the CP Co-ordinator and Depute CP Co-ordinator have attended the training/information session in Term 4.

### **Individual Pupil Child Protection Files**

Following ANY concern regarding a Child Protection matter, schools should ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept of the nature of the concern and with whom it was discussed. The following steps should be taken:

- Where a disclosure has been made by a pupil to a member of staff, the member of staff should write down the exact details of the disclosure as soon as possible after the event. This should include:
  - Details of location
  - Date
  - Time
  - Events prior to the disclosure
  - Others in attendance
  - What was said by the pupil (in their words)
  - Signed by member of staff
- An individual Child Protection File should be immediately opened by the CP Co-ordinator following a disclosure
- The individual child protection file must be kept in a separate file to the PPR, in a locked cabinet or in a secure password protected online area, accessible only by the Child Protection Co-ordinator (and a very limited number of other staff members as identified by the Head Teacher and/or the Child Protection Co-ordinator)
- The Child Protection Log must be updated
- The individual Child Protection File should contain the following sections:
  - Personal Details (SEEMiS)
  - Updated Chronology (Appendix 16) or **SEEMiS Chronology of Significant Events (COSE)**
  - Disclosure Paperwork
    - written/printed statements
    - records of telephone conversations
    - records of electronic correspondence
    - IRD Minutes
    - Child Protection Planning Meeting Minute
  - Referrals
  - Assessments
  - Child Protection – reports, minutes of Core Groups, CP Plans, CP Reviews
  - LAC Reports
  - Legal
  - Correspondence
  - Medical
  - Restricted information

The information contained in the child protection file should only be included if the documents are as a direct result of the child protection concerns being investigated. Once the investigation has been concluded, all documents would be stored as per routine procedures.

- Access to the Child Protection file should be monitored by the Child Protection Co-ordinator and should only be granted on a 'need to know' basis and logged as to why they require access. (Appendix 13)
- The Child's PPR should be marked with a Red Dot to indicate that a separate CP File exists. The dot should go on the right-hand side on the ridge of the file.
- A note should be placed in SEEMiS Pastoral notes, under significant events, to indicate that a CP file exists e.g. Child Protection file opened (Appendix 17)
- Every time any documents are added to the Child Protection file this should also be noted in SEEMiS as a significant event
- SEEMiS Child Protection tab and/or LAC tab should be updated
- The child protection information should be stored in this way whether it relates to a **CP Concern**, if the child is on the **Child Protection Register** or if the child **was on the Child Protection Register and has now been removed**.
- **Please note VPDs must not be printed and stored in this folder. The VPD number along with a brief summary should be recorded in SEEMiS.** Please refer to SEEMiS Pastoral Notes Guidance (Appendix 18)

#### **Transition of Child and Transfer of Child Protection File**

In the event a child, for whom a separate Child Protection file is held, moves to a new school the following should be considered as good practice in transferring files:

- The PPR should be sent as normal – the Child protection file should NOT be included
- Direct contact should be made by the Child Protection Co-ordinator to the receiving school Child Protection Co-ordinator **prior** to the child starting at the new school
- A brief overview of the Child Protection concerns should be provided
- A Child Plan Meeting should be considered so the transition can be well managed and the appropriate supports put in place before the child starts
- Details of how the Child Protection file will be transferred will be discussed and agreed at this point
- Conversation and agreed protocol should be recorded in SEEMiS Pastoral notes
- The Child Protection Co-ordinator must transfer all information that is relevant to child protection concerns, current or historic, paper based and electronic to the Child Protection Co-ordinator in the receiving establishment **within 5 working days of the child starting at the new establishment**
- Best practice dictates that the Child Protection file will be personally handed to the new Head Teacher, or Child Protection Co-ordinator, at the earliest opportunity within the above timeframe. If it is not possible to hand over the file personally then the file should be sent recorded delivery
- Liaison with any Social work services staff involved should also take place
- In **all circumstances**, receipt of any hard copy records/electronic files by the new establishment should be confirmed in writing either by letter or email

#### **How to Password Protect a Document**

- Open document
- Go to File
- Click encrypt with password
- Enter password

## **Staff Wellbeing Check/Supervision**

Support and supervision for practitioners involved in any child protection case, regardless of professional role, is critical to ensure:

- support for individuals, making sure they are not working in isolation but have access to advice and guidance from their line managers
- the safety, experience and voice of the child and family is a central focus
- it contributes to safe and consistent standards of practice across the school setting and develops good practice
- Staff develop knowledge and skills to think analytically, critically and reflectively
- Forms part of the school's system of quality assurance

As part of the Child Protection process, we have included the need for the support and supervision of all staff involved during and after reporting an incident. It offers a space for dialogue, critical reflection and careful consideration of risk recognising staff are sometimes involved in situations which can be difficult and distressing. In most cases this will be the role of the Child Protection Coordinator and/or the Depute. The QIO (Child Protection Lead) will provide support and supervision for the Child Protection Co-ordinator and/or Depute if and when required.

## **Tracking and Monitoring Progress of Care Experienced Children and Young People**

***Article 20 (children unable to live with their family) If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance.***  
*(United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child)*

The progress of children and young people, **currently** and **previously**, on the child protection register must be clearly monitored and their progress tracked via the nursery/school's tracking and monitoring process. This information should be collated termly and appropriate interventions and supports put in place in a timeous and appropriate manner. If the child moves to another nursery/school, it is imperative this information is passed on to the receiving school.

## **Exclusion**

- **Pupils on the Child Protection Register:** must be given special consideration when the option of exclusion is being contemplated. Consultation with social work prior to a decision about exclusion is essential for all pupils on the Child Protection Register to ensure appropriate arrangements can be made to keep the child safe.
- **Care Experienced Children and Young People:** The exclusion of CECYP requires very serious consideration. The 2004 Act states that all Care Experienced children will be deemed to have additional support needs unless assessed otherwise. In line with 'The Promise' Moray establishments will adhere, as far as practicable, to the advice issued that schools "*must not exclude care experienced children from education or reduce their timetable to such an extent that they are denied their rights to education..... The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from school must end.*" (*The Promise, February 2020*).
- In **exceptional** circumstances, when exclusion has been assessed as the **only** possible course of action for pupils on the Child Protection Register or are Care Experienced, **the Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Worker must be consulted before the final decision is taken.** To support this discussion the Team Around the Child must evidence to the Chief Education Officer and the Chief Social Worker that an alternative education package has been offered during the period of exclusion to ensure pupils on the Child Protection registers and/or CECYP continue to have the right to an education and which supports the wider processes of a comprehensive safety plan, including health and safety considerations, risk assessments and training to ensure a successful return for the child or young person to the setting.

## **Children Missing from Education**

Guidance on dealing with concerns regarding Children Missing from Education is contained within Moray Council policy [A Strategy for Supporting Pupil Attendance & Absences](#). Please see Appendix 19 for forms to be completed when you become aware a child is missing from education.

## **Information Sharing**

Sharing relevant information is an essential part of protecting children from harm. Practitioners and managers in statutory services and the voluntary sector should all understand when and how they may share information.

### **Information-sharing for Wellbeing Concerns and Child Protection: General Principles**

- The wellbeing of a child is of central importance when making decisions to share information with or about them.
- If you have concerns about a child's wellbeing, or a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm, relevant information **must** always be shared.
- The reasons why information needs to be shared, and particular actions taken should be communicated openly and honestly with children and, where appropriate, their families.
- At all times, information shared should be relevant, necessary, and proportionate to the circumstances of the child, and limited to those who need to know.
- When information is shared, a record should be made of when it was shared, with whom, for what purpose, in what form and whether it was disclosed with or without informed consent. Similarly, any decision not to share information should state the rational for why this decision was taken.

Where agencies are acting in fulfilment of their statutory duties, it is not necessary or appropriate to seek consent – for example, where a referral is made to the Children's Reporter under the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011, the consent of a child and/or parents/carers does not need to be sought prior to the submission of a report or where there is an allegation or indication that a child is at risk of significant harm, consent is not required to share concerns with one of the core agencies. Under Data Protection law it is perfectly acceptable and lawful to share such information and under these circumstances consent is not required. **There is an important distinction between making the child aware that information will/may be shared and seeking their consent for that sharing.**

## **School Handbook and Notes for Parents Booklet**

Education provides schools with the "Notes for Parents/Carers" booklet on an annual basis, and schools issue this to all pupils enrolling in the school. The booklet must include the following statement:

### **Child Protection School Handbook Insert**

***Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect) Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.***

*(United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child)*

The Moray Council is committed to safeguarding all children and young people. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and abuse in all its forms. These include:

- |                         |                              |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Physical Abuse        | • Female Genital Mutilation  | • Domestic Abuse             |
| • Emotional Abuse       | • Forced Marriage            | • Parental Drug Use          |
| • Sexual Abuse          | • Forced or Dangerous Labour | • Parental Alcohol Use       |
| • Criminal Exploitation | • Child Sexual Exploitation  | • Parental Mental Health     |
| • Child Trafficking     | • Harmful Sexual Behaviour   | • Child Placing Self at Risk |
| • Neglect               | • Radicalisation             |                              |



When school staff have concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm, these concerns will be reported immediately to the school's designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC). The CPC will then consult with Social Work and/or Police Scotland to clarify and assess the level of risk or harm to the child and determine the appropriate course of action.

Any decision about informing a child's parent or carer should be made in partnership with Social Work and/or Police Scotland as part of the referral process. School staff, including the CPC, will not contact parents or carers prior to this multi-agency discussion as doing so may compromise the child's safety and the integrity of any subsequent investigation.

If you have an immediate child protection concern and cannot contact education, please contact Social Work directly on **01343 554370** or if it is out with working hours call the Out of Hours Social Work Team on **03457 565656**. If you cannot contact Social Work, please call Police Scotland on **101**. If it is an emergency call **999** immediately.

(Further information regarding these indicators of risk can be found in the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023](#))

### **Out of Office Child Protection Statement**

Please ensure that staff have the following statement included in their out of office at all times:

If you have a child protection concern and cannot contact education, please contact Social Work directly on **01343 554370** or if it is out with working hours call the Out of Hours Social Work Team on **03457 565656**. If you cannot contact Social Work, please call Police Scotland on **101**. If it is an emergency call **999** immediately.

### **Contacts**

**If you have a Child Protection Concern:**

**Access Team**

01343 554370

**Social Work 'Out of Hours' Team**

03457 565656

**Police**

101

**If you require further information or advice on guidance and procedures:**

Quality Improvement Officer (Child Protection Lead)

[education@moray.gov.uk](mailto:education@moray.gov.uk)

Emma Johnston

Lead Officer (Public Protection)

07855 270356

[emma.johnston@moray.gov.uk](mailto:emma.johnston@moray.gov.uk)