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People Matter

Education, People & Business

Education Procedure Manual 3/21

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

For

**Teachers and Employees on Scottish Negotiating Committee
for Teachers (SNCT) Conditions of Service**

Effective from: November 2025

Education, People & Business



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Version Control History

Version No.	Effective Date	Details of change from previous version	Date Approved	New version no.
-	May 22	Updated to new template Review following update of National Child Protection guidance (2021), ED Multiagency CP Guidance 2023 and GIRFEC, 2023. Policy extracted from procedure as separate document.	30/05/2024	1.0
1.0	May 24	Section 19 updated: procedure cited has been retired and updated instruction added.	21/11/2025	2.0

GDPR Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council holds, uses and processes information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and all other relevant national data protection laws. Further information detailing how East Dunbartonshire holds and uses personal information and copies of privacy notices used throughout the Council are available on our [website](#).

Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Changes to SNCT National Conditions of Service
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Elected Members, Trade Unions and/or Management.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety, and understanding when and how to share these concerns, how to investigate and assess concerns, and fundamentally, what steps are required to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure has been developed to support practitioners and managers to recognise and respond to child protection and safeguarding concerns. They outline how all staff within Education in East Dunbartonshire should work together with partners, parents/carers, families, and communities to prevent harm and to protect children from abuse and neglect. Child protection procedures will not in themselves keep children safe.
- 1.3 There are several key changes to the updated Child Protection National Guidance, 2021 and significantly, a greater integration with Getting it Right for Every Child creating a continuum of support. The changes facilitate a streamlined approach and shared common language and GIRFEC core components to ensure earliest intervention and effective, proportionate support and intervention by universal services such as education and health, through to targeted services like social work to help protect against significant harm.
- 1.4 Within East Dunbartonshire, in line with National guidance and the UNCRC, there is a renewed focus to ensure:
 - The child or young person and their family at the heart of all planning, support and decision making
 - Working together with families to enable a rights respecting, strengths-based, inclusive approach (with all agencies)
 - Understanding wellbeing in all areas of life including family, community, and society
 - Considering and addressing inequalities
 - Valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly.
 - The integration of GIRFEC, Safeguarding and Child Protection reinforces the understanding that the wellbeing and safety of children are inextricably linked and should not be treated as two separate aspects.
- 1.5 There is a clear emphasis on the importance of GIRFEC in protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help, from the right support, at the right time.
- 1.6 Everyone in East Dunbartonshire has an individual responsibility to protect children from harm, to make sure that they are familiar with procedures, to understand their roles and responsibilities and to work collaboratively, ensuring good communication and joint working.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Procedure document applies to all staff within Education, who have a duty of care to make sure all children and young people are safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

This includes all staff within a school, including supply teachers, all non-teaching staff, technicians, janitorial, catering and cleaning staff who have regular contact with children.

- 2.2 Senior leaders must ensure these procedures are implemented fully.

- 2.3 It is noted that 'schools' refers to all Primary, Secondary, ASN and Early Learning & Childcare establishments.

Senior leaders include head teachers, heads of establishments, managers, and principal educational psychologist (PEP).

3.0 References & Related Documentation

- 3.1 All references and related documents for this procedure are detailed in [Appendix 1](#), in addition to:

- PM 3/21/F01: Child Protection Notification of Concern/Referral Form
- PM 3/21/F02: Risk Assessment-Sexually Harmful Behaviours
- PM 03/39: Managing un-notified absences of children in East Dunbartonshire Primary, Secondary, Special and Early Years Establishments (including procedure for Early Years private and voluntary partnership)

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 This section outlines the responsibilities for implementing the policy and procedures relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

It is noted young people aged between 16 and 18 years may access different legal frameworks such as the Adult Support and Protection Act, or the Human Trafficking Act but in general terms, for the purposes of the policy the protection of children and young people including unborn babies, and children and young people under the age of 18 years.

To ensure effective implementation of the policy, close partnership working is essential, with parents and carers and relevant agencies, including Social Work, Police, Health Services, and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA). It is the sharing of information, collective thinking and collaborative action that enables decisions to be made in the best interests of children.

"All agencies have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the focus of their involvement. Effective partnerships between organisations, professional bodies and the public are more likely if key roles and responsibilities are well defined and understood" National Guidance for

Child Protection in Scotland (2021).

4.2 Chief Executive Officer

Within East Dunbartonshire Council the Chief Executive is committed to ensuring:

- Child Protection procedures are regularly reviewed to meet national legislative requirements and standards
- Appropriate representation from services within the Education, People and Business Directorate on strategic group – Delivering for Children and Young People Partnership
- Identification of resources which will facilitate the development of effective and regular Child Protection training and staff development for Directorate staff, and
- Respond appropriately to child protection issues which may be raised by the Directorate's Designated Persons for Child Protection.

4.3 Chief Education Officer

The Chief Education Officer is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of Child Protection policy and procedure across the service and in schools.

- Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place which support the effective implementation of the policy/procedures by service managers, Head Teachers, and staff.
- Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place which support the sharing of best practice in relation to the care and protection of children and young people.
- Respond appropriately to any concerns raised by Child Protection Coordinators about staff who may pose a risk to the care and welfare of children and young people.
- Ensure that service teams have adequate knowledge and skills to implement policies and procedures relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

4.4 Head Teacher/Head of Centre

The head teacher/head of centre, is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed in the event of concerns regarding a child's welfare or evidence of the risk of immediate danger to them.

- Annual review and update the implementation of this policy with staff, children and young people, parents, and carers as is appropriate. This helps to ensure the relevance of the policy and gives priority to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Ensure relevant documentation/CP Policy is available to everyone.
- School website must link to CPC webpage and the Education Service Child Protection Procedures 2023.
- Posters throughout learning environment detailing CP Coordinator and contact

details.

- Clear procedures for reporting a concern should be contained in school and staff handbooks and access to the Education Procedure Manual 3/21.
- Access to translation and interpreting services, sign language can be accessed Education Department or Council's support services.
- Members of staff who are working with children with complex additional support needs should seek advice from within the Education Service's specialist provision.
- Good practice ensures the Child Protection Coordinator details are on visitor identification badges.
- Good practice ensures all visitors sign that they are aware of CP procedures.

4.5 Child Protection Coordinator

The designated CP Coordinator is always a member of the Senior Leadership Team, usually the Head Teacher in primary schools and Depute Head Teacher in secondary schools. Child Protection Coordinators must:

- Be the main contact for child protection referrals from staff and ensure the procedures in this policy are followed.
- Ensure the Single Point of Access is updated to accurately reflect email address(s).
- Ensure all staff have a robust understanding of Child Protection Policy, Process, and Practice through annual child protection training.
- Ensure all staff have access to the child protection calendar (CLPL) and opportunities to attend relevant child protection training (including part time members of staff, staff who return from absence or supply members of staff).
- Ensure that all staff, children, and families are aware of who the Child Protection Coordinator is and how to access support.
- Ensure general information on pupil support and child protection is readily available to children/young people, families, and staff, including the role of the Named Person and Lead Professional (as appropriate).
- Use professional judgement to determine whether concerns can be resolved through appropriate discussion with parents and carers or if concerns must be referred to Advice and Response. Where doubts about involving parents exist, advice must be sought from Advice and Response
- Liaise with other agencies to support investigations, IRD's, court proceedings, child supervision requirements and case referrals.
- Attendance at IRD's and relevant meetings
- Ensure implementation of GIRFEC National Practice Model Wellbeing Assessments and Actions Plans are in place for all children and young people who require them (including those de-registered for six months).
- Ensure thorough and confidential record keeping of all information, related to child welfare and protection is carefully recorded on a Chronology (COSE) (SEEMIS) as a significant event.

- Ensure child protection files are securely stored and kept up to date with clear registration/de-registration dates as well as clear protocols for sharing of the information.

NOTE: Significant Events within Pastoral Notes must be marked as such by checking Advanced Options, Significant Events; this automatically ensures that the note is confidential. All Child Protection concerns/incidents must be recorded as a significant event.

4.6 Education staff

It is the responsibility of *all* practitioners in education establishments to ensure a robust understanding of child protection policy and practice whilst contributing to, maintaining, and reflecting the vision of East Dunbartonshire's Children's Services Partnership.

"All children in East Dunbartonshire are seen, heard and helped; they are effectively protected, safeguarded, properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together"

Therefore, all practitioners should:

- Ensure a robust understanding of this, Child Protection Procedure Manual, and Policy.
- Contribute to a proactive school and community ethos, which seeks to understand and minimise the risk of harm.
- Follow the Information Sharing guidelines to appropriately share information on a multiagency basis which is of benefit to a child's wellbeing.
- Focus on preventative, early intervention strategies.
- Respond effectively and promptly to any concerns, especially of imminent risk to a child.
- Contribute to assessment and recording of all child wellbeing, welfare and child protection concerns, using a chronology of significant events and related documentation.

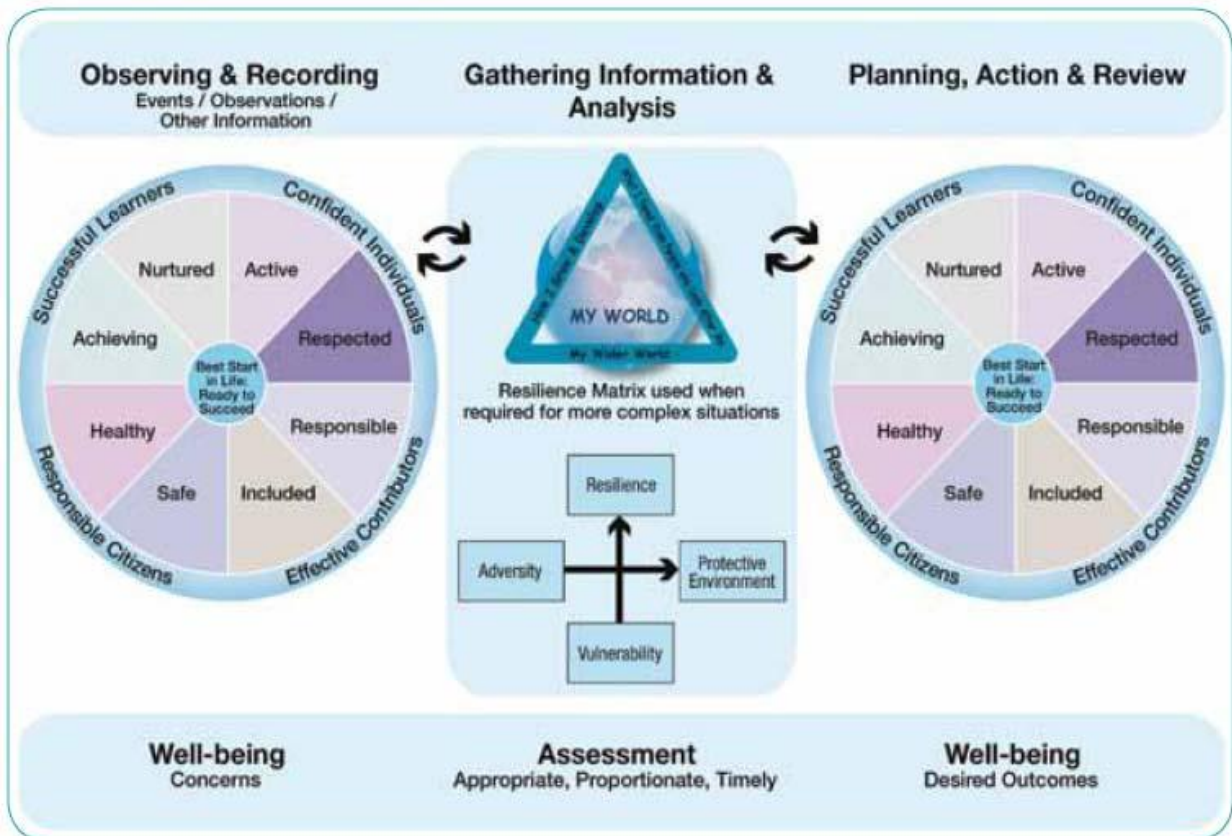
5.0 Quality Assurance

- 5.1 Self-evaluation is the key to the continuous improvement of services to protect children. Schools are required to evaluate their own processes and gather evidence on the effectiveness of the school's procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection (QI 2.1)
- 5.2 Any areas for improvement should be included in the school's planning structures and if they involve another agency, communicated to the GIRFEC Steering Group. QIOs and multiagency staff use information to analyse and review practice. This includes file audits.

6.0 GIRFEC National Practice Model

- 6.1 Practitioners must ensure early intervention and prevention is in place to safeguard children and young people through effective tracking and monitoring of wellbeing.

- 6.2 The definition of wellbeing is considered through 8 indicators and at the core of ensuring children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Included, Nurtured, Active, Respected Responsible, and Included. This includes in school, at home and in the local community. Effective partnership working across Children's Services helps ensure this. [GIRFEC](#)



Through assessment of a child's wellbeing, and in line with Including Every Learning Policy, it might be relevant to request assistance from another service/agency to help provide and coordinate support for a child.

Any intervention should be detailed in a plan to ensure outcomes improve and the Team around the Child should monitor improvements carefully.

Before requesting assistance from any other agency/service, the 5 key GIRFEC questions should be considered:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency do to help this child or young person?

- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

It is noted that whilst the GIRFEC framework is used to support the overall wellbeing of children and young people, it does not replace existing child protection systems and processes. Using the National Practice Model should provide a link between both.

7.0 Significant Concern

7.1 Where there is a *significant concern* about a child's welfare/wellbeing, practitioners should not delay in following child protection procedures. In some situations, the child will be already known to other Services such as Social Work and may already have a Child Protection plan in place. For others, a change in circumstances or disclosure may initiate child protection procedures. [The National Child Protection Guidance 2021 Part 1.](#)

7.2 Concerns are identified as being significant through professional collaboration and judgement. It requires practitioners to decide based on the child/young person's needs, parent/carer capacity and the likelihood of harm, significant or otherwise. In understanding risk, it is important to consider the reactions of parents/carers and especially the feelings of the child/young person concerned.

7.3 Other considerations include:

- The child's experience, needs, feelings (as much as is known)
- The nature, degree and extent of abuse, neglect, incident (including emotional harm)
- Duration and frequency of abuse and neglect
- Whether the harm/risk is premeditated
- Overall parenting capacity
- Any threats of coercive control, threat and any other factors that may increase risk to the child, family, or wider context.

A significant concern could be a single, one-off incident such as a physical assault, however, more often significant harm is the result of an accumulation of events such as neglect that impacts the child's all-round development and especially emotionally and physically.

Assessment and analysis of wellbeing is important in deciding when a child may require intervention, support, and protection from social work and/or police however, if in any doubt, the child protection coordinator should not delay in contacting the Advice and Response team for guidance.

7.4 How concerns may 'come to light'

Concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing are likely to emerge in one of the following ways:

- The child discloses alleged abuse,

- A member of staff observes an injury which may be indicative of abuse,
- Sustained concerns about the presentation or behaviour of a child which may be indicative of abuse or neglect,
- The establishment is contacted by another agency as part of a child protection inquiry or investigation,
- Another child's parent, friend of the child or member of the public may express concern or make an allegation of child abuse.

7.5 Children and young people often take time to seek out and test adults to whom they wish to disclose abuse – disclosure is more often a process than an event, and Children with complex support needs may find it difficult to communicate concern.

8.0 Involving Children and Young People

8.1 In line with the UNCRC, children have many rights, one of which is the right to have their views heard. This is especially important for all matters concerning them and especially in relation to child protection and making the best decisions to keep them safe, both immediately and in the future. The Team around the Child (and others) have a duty to involve, actively listen and consider the views of a child/young person. [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)

8.2 Underpinning the principles of GIRFEC and other policy drivers are the principles of participation. Children and young people should be helped to understand why child protection processes are in place and practitioners must ensure they listen to children, seek their views at every stage of the child protection process and give them information relating to the decisions being made subject to their age, stage and understanding.

8.3 Where available, or where it is deemed to be in the child's best interests, Advocacy Services should be sought to assist the child to elicit and/or articulate their views.

9.0 Procedure and Flowchart

9.1 Everyone who works in Education/Children's Services, whether in school, alternative provision or early years settings has a professional and contractual obligation to report to the child protection co-ordinator if:

- they have reason to suspect a child has been or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm.
- an allegation is made by a child/young person against a member of staff, or any other person.
- they are concerned about the conduct of a member of staff, or any other person, towards a child / young person.
- an allegation is made against you.

9.2 This must be done immediately to enable the most appropriate, timely and effective response and outcome for the child/young person.

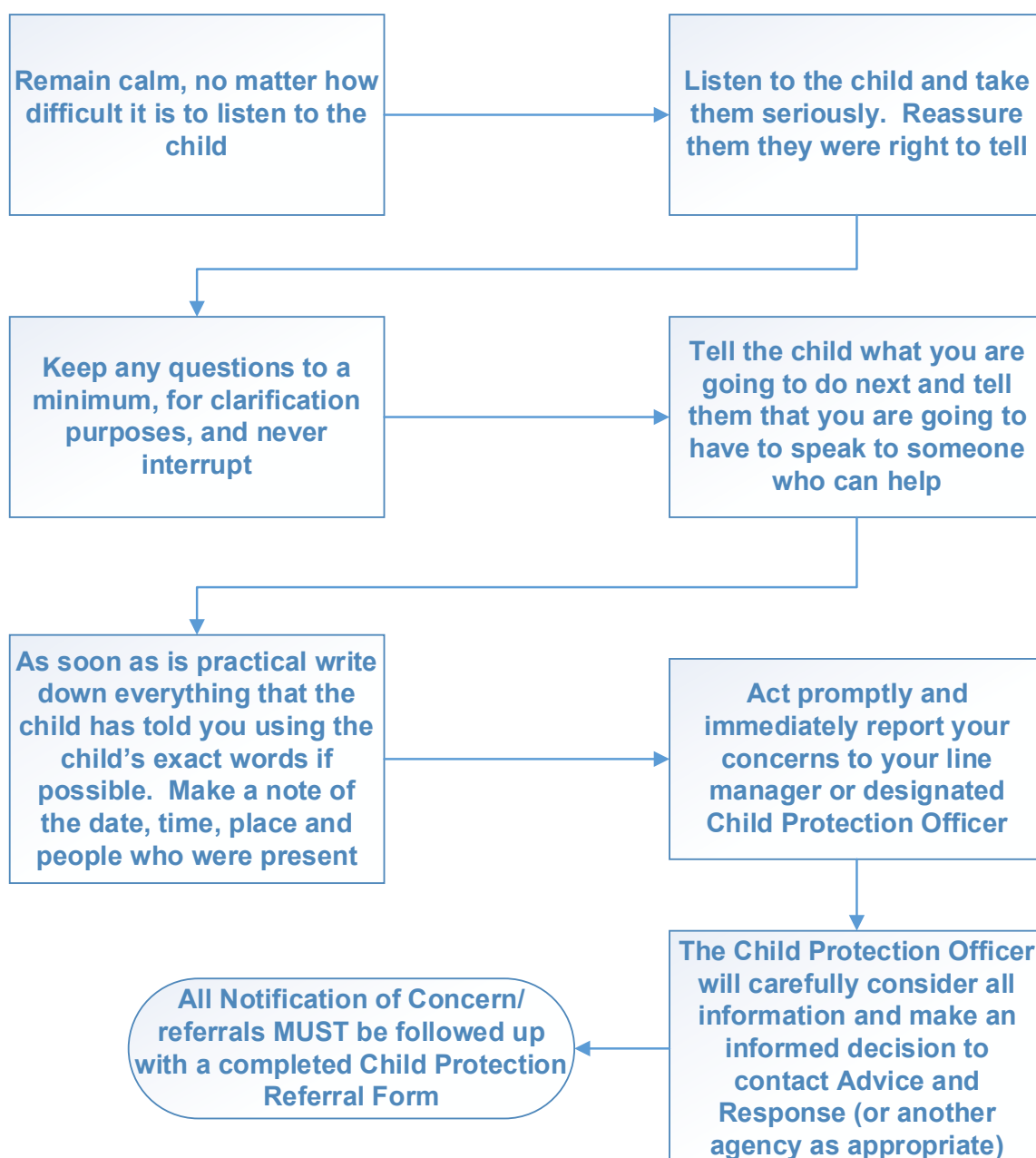
9.3 If a child/young person discloses information the steps must be followed.

- Remain calm – no matter how difficult it is to listen to what a child has told you.
- Take them seriously. Reassure them they were correct to tell/share information with you.
- Keep questions to a minimum, for clarification purposes and don't interrupt.
- Explain to the child you will need to share what they have told you and that this is to help.
- As soon is possible, write everything down that the child has told you – using their exact words. Ensure the date, time, place, and people who were present.
- Act promptly and immediately report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, or senior leader in their absence.

The flowchart identifies procedure to follow by all Education Service Staff to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

- 9.4 The Child Protection Officer will carefully analyse all information and make an informed decision to contact social work and submit a Notification of Concern, (or decide to request assistance from another source or agency).
- 9.5 This should be done immediately (*or as soon as possible*) to avoid any inaccuracies.
- 9.6 The Notification of Concern/referral form should be used to record details exactly as the child/young person has shared. This will be completed by the Child Protection Coordinator, or senior leader in their absence.

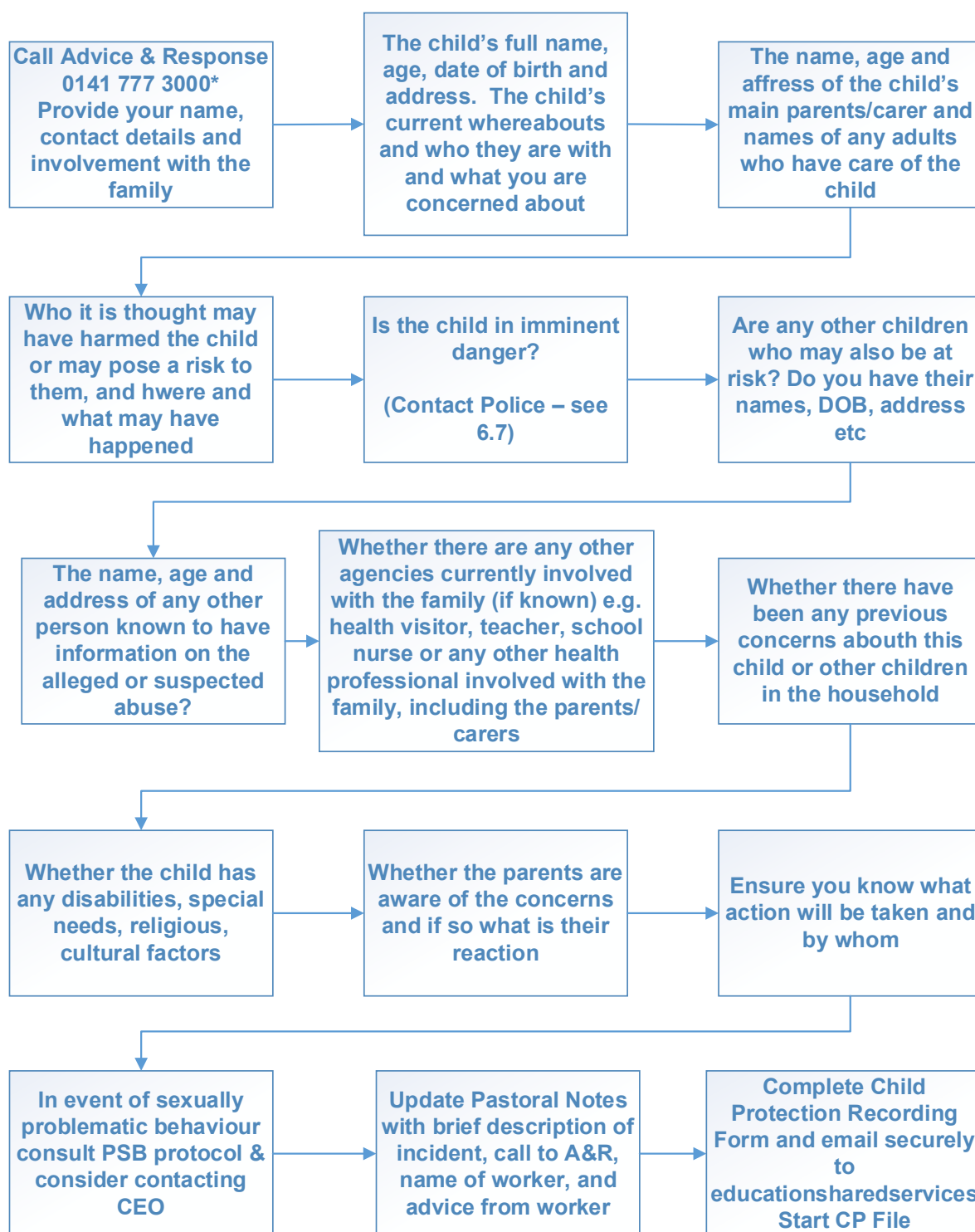
It is good practice for schools to use a standardised proforma to gather information from staff to be shared with the Child Protection Coordinator to eliminate any inaccuracies.



9.7 Child Protection Coordinator

The flowchart identifies procedure to follow by the Child Protection Co-ordinator to Advice and Response (Social Work)

Out with Normal Hours contact: Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Services 0300 3431501



10.0 Notification of a Concern/Referral involving potentially Problematic Sexual Behaviour

10.1 Children who exhibit or are victim of problematic sexual behaviour (PSB) must have additional risk management processes applied (See Protocol on Problematic Sexual Behaviour).

10.2 Consideration should be given to immediate Police involvement, and where this applies

the Chief Education Officer must be informed without delay.

- 10.3 The assessment of risk posed to all children and young people must include the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim and their families. This may result in individual timetables and/or close adult supervision being agreed and in extreme cases exclusion or authorised absence may be considered to ensure the safety and security of all concerned. In all cases, as per the PSB Protocol, multi-agency risk management processes must be followed.
- 10.4 The Quality Improvement Manager (ASN) citing on behalf of the Chief Education Officer must be consulted.
- 10.5 Plans for the ongoing educational provision of any child subject to risk protection/management for PSB will be immediately commenced and where necessary supported by central education service staff. [Safeguarding: identify, understand and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours in young people | Resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- 10.6 These plans will be recorded in a Risk Assessment (PM 3/21/F02) and it may be part of wider planning such as an Action Plan.
- 10.7 Where the alleged incident is not viewed as Child Protection, the Named Person will revert to Personalised Support processes to manage the situation as a welfare/wellbeing concern, though this will be done within a multiagency context and will include guidance from Psychological Service, Social Work, Family Protection Unit and any other appropriate service or agency.
- 10.8 Social Work Advice and Response (Duty) Team will confirm the level of involvement of the Police (Family Protection Unit). Where the FPU are involved any school investigation must be suspended immediately.
- 11.0 **Notification of Concern for children/young people who reside out with East Dunbartonshire**
- 11.1 Where a concern arises about a child/young person who is known to live out with East Dunbartonshire, a referral should be made directly to the local authority where the child lives. Staff can use the following [link](#) to find contact information to the relevant social work office.
- 11.2 The Child Protection Notification of Concern/referral form should be completed and a copy of this sent to sharedservices.education@eastdunbarton.gov.uk as for other referrals.
- 12.0 **Reporting Child Protection concerns to the Police**
- 12.1 Normally the Child Protection Coordinator will be advised by Advice and Response as to whether to contact the Police. The Child Protection Coordinator may decide to contact the Police immediately where there are urgent circumstances such as:
 - Where there is indication that a crime either has been committed or may be

committed

- The immediate avoidance of further abuse
- The immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser
- The avoidance of the destruction of evidence
- The need for Emergency Child Protection Measures (for information on these Orders see Child Protection Interagency Guidance, EDC, 2002, pp. 31-32)
- Where a child may have been harmed by a person unknown to the child and their family.

Members of staff who make an urgent referral to the Police **must** notify their Child Protection Coordinator.

Following a referral to the Police, the child protection pro-forma must be completed and sent to East Dunbartonshire Council's Advice & Response Team.

It should be noted in the pro-forma that a referral was made to the police.

12.2 Report by a Member of the Public or a Relative

Referrals concerning a child at risk of significant harm will often come from family members, friends, or neighbours; sometimes, children will make allegations directly. Staff must make it clear to members of the public that they have an obligation to pass on information about child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies and that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where the child is thought to have experienced, or be likely to be at risk of, significant harm.

13.0 Procedure when a request has been made to Social Work Advice and Response

13.1 When a Notification of Concern/referral has been received made to Advice and Response one of the following decisions may be made:

- Child Protection Procedures are initiated, and an Initial Agency Referral (IRD) arranged.
- No further action required (NFA)

13.2 It is the responsibility of each individual professional to ensure that their Child Protection concerns are taken seriously and followed through.

13.3 If No Further Action is decided, this should be communicated to the Child Protection Coordinator from Social Work, including if they have signposted relevant supports.

13.4 Everyone is accountable for their own role in the Child Protection process which must be considered as a partnership between agencies. Appropriate, proportionate, and relevant information is of paramount important to enable effective decision making to take place.

13.5 The table outlines the process from social work when a child protection process is initiated:

Activity	Timescale
IRD to CPPM	Within 28 days
Planning the CPP meeting	At least 5 days' notice of meeting
Pre-birth CPP meeting	Within 28 days of the concern or within 28 weeks of gestation
Review CPP Meeting	Within 6 months of CPPM
Review of pre-birth CPP Meeting	May be held within 3 months but requires professional judgement about most appropriate timing
Summary of key decisions and agreed actions from CPPM	Within 24 hrs Minute (note of meeting)
CPPM Within 15 days Child Protection Plan	Within 5 days
Inquorate Meeting	New meeting must be held within 10 working days

13.6 Initial Agency Referral Discussion (IRD)

- 13.6.1 An inter-agency referral discussion (IRD) is the formal process of information sharing, assessment, analysis, and decision-making following reported concern about abuse or neglect of a child or young person up to the age of 18 years, in relation to familial and non-familial concerns, and of brothers / sisters or other children within the same context. This includes an unborn baby that may be exposed to current or future risk.
- 13.6.2 An IRD takes place whenever a Child Protection Notification of Concern/Referral is received by one of the core agencies and indicates that a child has suffered, is suffering or may be at risk of significant harm, abuse, or neglect.
- 13.6.3 The IRD provides the strategic direction for the Child Protection investigation through joint information sharing, assessment and decision making and should take place as quickly as is practicable.
- 13.6.4 Where concerns exist in relation to multiple families/children, a strategic and coordinated response will be required.
- 13.6.5 Additional agencies including adult services, or third sector agencies may also contribute information to inform the decision-making process.
- 13.6.6 The Child Protection Coordinator should attend the IRD, or in their absence, the Named Person Only one representative from each educational establishment should

attend an IRD. Relevant information will be provided on current situation, focusing on wellbeing, learning and family circumstances. The representative will be responsible for joint decision making within the IRD and so must be sufficiently senior to assess and discuss available information and to make decisions on behalf of education.

- 13.6.7 The police have lead responsibility for criminal investigations relating to child abuse and neglect and share responsibilities to keep the child safe and a designated health professional will lead on the need for and nature of recommended health assessments as part of the process.
- 13.6.8 The IRD process will not be considered completed until a decision is made as to what action is required. If a child protection investigation (CPI) is required, this will be reflected in the IRD record along with an agreed safety plan which identifies individual tasks and timescales to protect the child or young person during the investigation. If a decision is reached that no further child protection measures are required, the IRD should consider whether a co-ordinated child's plan may still be beneficial through a GIRFEC approach.
- 13.6.9 A Team around the Child meeting to consider how best to meet a child's needs, especially if no further action has been arranged.

14.0 Child's Plan

- 14.1 Children and young people supported through Child Protection processes should have a Child's Plan to help monitor interventions and ensure outcomes improve. Some children will also require an Action Plan to ensure educational attainment and achievement is developed and personalised support should be in place for as long as the child or young person requires it, and certainly maintained until six months following de-registration.

The Lead Professional will oversee targeted interventions and along with the Named Person carefully monitor outcomes.

When a child's name is removed from the Register the Child's Plan should be reviewed at the Review Child Protection Case Conference decision. The plan should form part of the establishment's child protection record and action planning to support should continue for the duration it is required.

14.2 Confidential Child Protection Files

Child protection evidence must be kept securely and comply with Data Protection and GPMS. The Child Protection Coordinator will store Confidential Child Protection Files in a secure place designated for that purpose.

The information should be updated and organised under the appropriate headings:

Pupil Information – mainly from Click and Go
Coordinators notes – memos, notes of concerns

Plans – e.g. the Child's Plan, Child Protection Plan and Action Plan
School-based Reports – reports on progress and attendance
Agency Reports – reports & assessments from health, social services
Correspondence – e.g. invitations to meetings,
Views of the child – Child/Young Person Report or other documented discussion
<p>Chronology: In each section, the most recent documents should be placed at the front and all documents should be arranged in chronological order. There should be a summary chronology at the front of the folder filed in the Pupil Information section. This chronology should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the event • Date of the event • Date recorded • Source of the information • Recorded by • Action taken

A flagging system should be adopted e.g., a coloured dot attached to the exterior of the child's PPR to ensure that staff can identify that confidential information exists.

Where a child has been the subject of a child protection investigation but there has been no Child Protection Case Conference, the school should maintain the record on the child's Child Protection file until he/she has attained eighteen years.

A confidential copy of this information should be sent to any school to which the child subsequently transfers – this includes transition from primary to secondary.

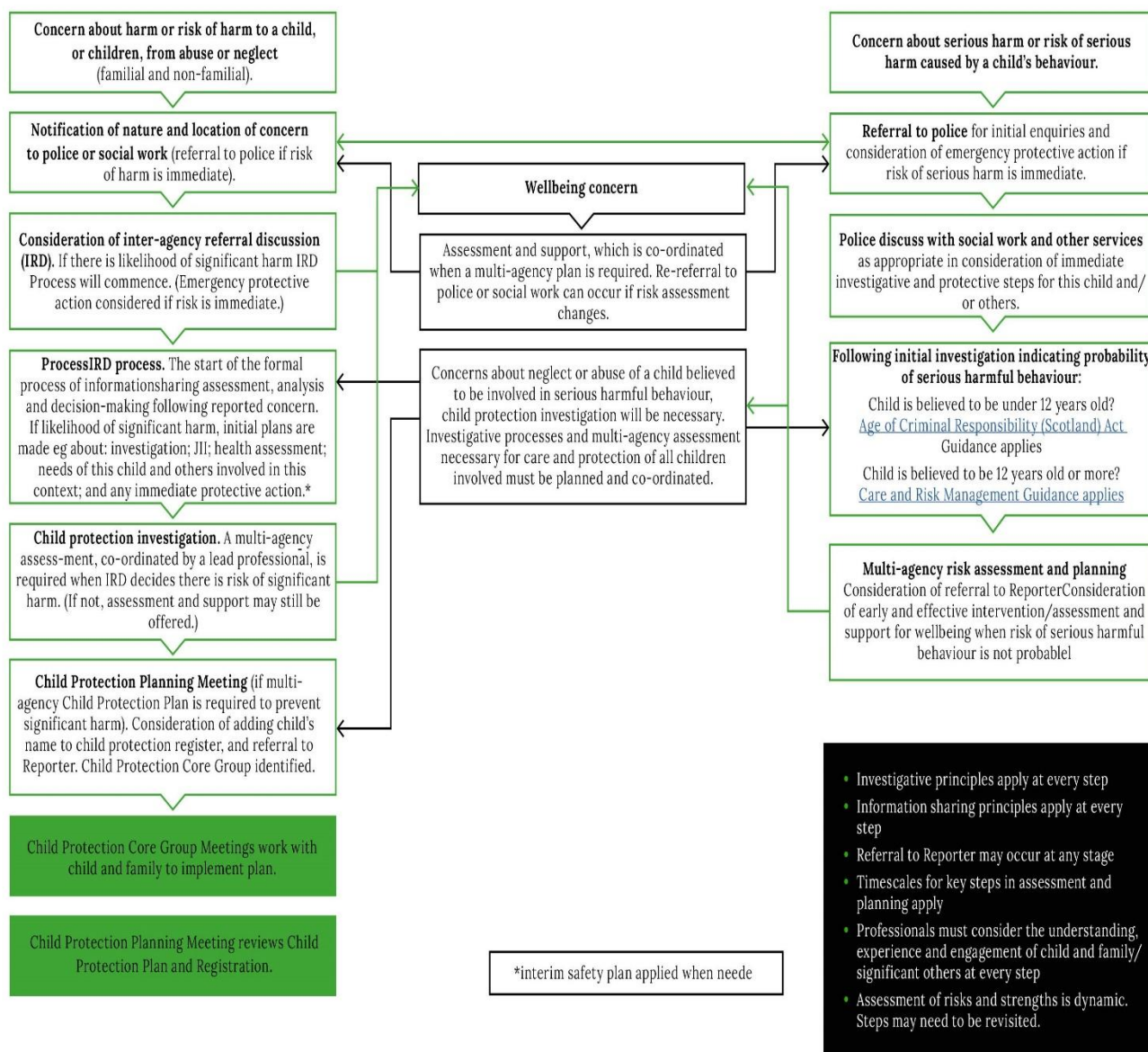
If a child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register, a record of this fact and all associated documentation should be securely held on the child's file.

All electronic documentation should be stored in secure folders with restricted access.

NOTE: Where there is No Further Action under Child Protection, the Named Person(s) will convene meetings to ensure appropriate assessments and planning in place.

14.3 The Child Protection Process: Quick Guide – (taken from the Child Protection Procedure, East Dunbarton 2023)

Child Protection Pathway



15.0 Liaison with Parents and Carers

15.1 Where staff have concerns about the welfare or wellbeing of a child but have decided that these do not warrant a child protection referral at that time, their concerns should be discussed openly with parents and a wellbeing assessment completed by the Named Person.

15.2 Where the Child Protection Coordinator has decided to refer child protection concerns to one of the investigating agencies, a decision as to how parents/carers will be

informed should be taken in conjunction with them.

- 15.3 Parents/carers should be informed at the earliest opportunity if a Notification of Concern has been made, unless to do so would place the child at significant risk or harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If there is any doubt, a decision can be made between the Child Protection coordinator and the Advice and Response Team
 - 15.4 If social work become involved, as Lead Professional the social worker has the main responsibility to engage with parents/carers.
 - 15.5 Good and clear communication should be maintained throughout any investigative period and professional respect used to ensure parents/carers don't feel judged or to blame. This enables the opportunity for parents/carers to learn and make the changes needed to parent their children effectively. This can be sometimes difficult, depending on the situation, and so the Child Protection Coordinator should support staff where required.
- 16.0 Children's Hearings**
- 16.1 Any person who believes that a child may need compulsory measures of supervision may refer a child to the Reporter. Such measures are defined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 where the child is:
 - Beyond the control of parents/carers,
 - Falling into 'bad associations' or 'exposed to moral danger,
 - Suffering or likely to have impaired health or development due to lack of parental care
 - Failing to attend school regularly without reasonable cause,
 - Looked After by the Local Authority,
 - A child in respect of whom any of the offences mentioned in Criminal Procedures (S) Act 1995 (offences against children),
 - Offending, and/or
 - Misusing a volatile substance.
 - 16.2 In most circumstances, requests made to the Reporter should be multiagency and evidence clearly the support already in place however, the Team Around the Child may refer directly to SCRA.
 - 16.3 Any reports submitted to the Reporter and any representative attending a Children's Hearing should provide good quality information in relation to education, welfare, and direct knowledge of the child. The Wellbeing Assessment and Request for Assistance should be used to provide the information.
 - 16.4 In preparing reports for Child Protection case conferences or the Reporter, practitioners should actively involve children and young people, and their parents/carers if deemed safe to do so.

17.0 School Transfer

- 17.1 When a child whose name is on the Child Protection Register changes school, the school, which the child is leaving, should:
- Inform the receiving school immediately that the child's name is on the Child Protection Register,
 - Transfer all relevant records,
 - Share the child's Child Protection Plan and Education (SEEMIS) Action Plan with the receiving school
 - Inform the social worker or team leader in social services.
- 17.2 In all cases where a child is changing school, the Head Teacher or Named Person of the school, which the child is leaving, has the responsibility to establish the name of the school to which the child is transferring. Where the onward destination cannot be established, the Service Manager (ASN) should be informed immediately for all children and young people. The procedures for locating the child are explained in Procedure Manual 3/39 "Managing Un-Notified Absences Of Children In East Dunbartonshire Educational Establishments (Including Early Years Private, Voluntary, And Independent Funded Providers)".
- 17.3 It is the responsibility of the home authority to inform any receiving authority of a child on the Child Protection Register. A [transfer Case Conference](#) must be set up within a designated timescale and education staff must attend.

18.0 Named Person

- 18.1 The Named Person has the overall responsibility to ensure that contact is maintained between Named Persons in the event of a child transferring to another school, transferring to home-schooling or moving out with the authority. Named Persons should be proactive in ensuring that the Named Persons' of siblings are informed of actions as appropriate. Where the Named Person is not the Child Protection Coordinator, there must be appropriate procedures in place to ensure information is transferred.

19.0 Procedures to be followed when children are missing from education.

- 19.1 Although attendance at pre-school education is not compulsory, consideration of a child's wellbeing should be considered. If any concerns, this should be followed up through contact with the Named Person/Health Visitor and Advice and Response team as appropriate.
- 19.2 Additional information about children who are Missing in Education can be found in Procedure Manual 03/39 "Managing un-notified absences of children in East Dunbartonshire Primary, Secondary, Special and Early Years Establishments (including procedure for Early Years private and voluntary partnership)".

20.0 Contact by Another Statutory Agency (such as Police, Health or SCRA)

- 20.1 When another agency contacts the establishment regarding possible child protection

concerns, this should be directed to the Child Protection Coordinator. It is important to verify that this is a genuine contact by making a return phone call before beginning any confidential discussions about a child.

- 20.2 It is the role of the Child Protection Coordinator to provide clear and suitably detailed information about the child's wellbeing, including any details relating to potential welfare issues.
- 20.3 Through discreet contact with other members of staff, the Child Protection Coordinator should gather these details as rapidly as is consistent with ensuring good quality information.
- 20.4 Any undue delay in providing the information to the other agency may result in the child being exposed to unnecessary risk. The matter should not be discussed with the child unless the other agency has specifically requested this.
- 20.5 Where requests for information are verbal, a record of what was said and to whom should be maintained within Pastoral Notes. Written requests for assessment information may come in the form of an Integrated Assessment Framework. Such information is framed under the My World Triangle indicators. These reports should be transferred following guidance in the Information Sharing Protocol.

21.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

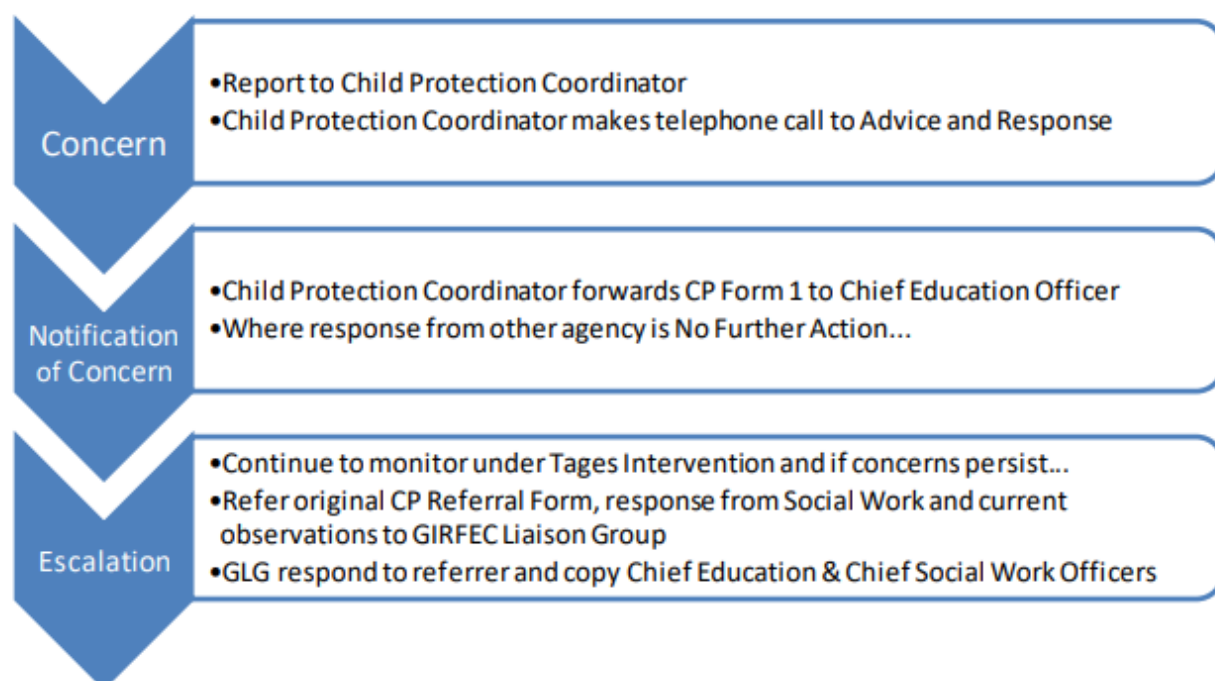
- 21.1 Personal information about service users and their families held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the persons concerned.
- 21.2 It is critical that education staff are clear that wherever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or young person may be suffering or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, they should share, seek advice and where necessary refer concerns to social work or the police.
- 21.3 The child's interests must be the overriding consideration in making such decisions.
- 21.4 All children and young people have a right to be listened to and to have matters treated in confidence. Involving children and young people and upholding their rights is good practice and builds trust with children, young people, and their families. Where there is no significant risk to a child's wellbeing, school staff should respect their right to confidentiality.
- 21.5 In the event of potential of harm to a child or young person or where the child or young person has already been identified as being at risk through child protection procedures the need for consent regarding information sharing is overridden and should not be sought.
- 21.6 A person over 16 years of age has the capacity to consent. A child under 16 has that capacity, if the child has a general understanding of what is involved. In the absence of any indication to the contrary children aged 12 or over are generally expected to be old enough and to have that understanding to give their consent. However, the

understanding or capacity of the child needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, where a child is unable to consent, then a person with parental responsibilities and parental rights, such as a parent, guardian, or carer, should be asked to give consent on behalf of the child unless this places the child or others at greater risk.

- 21.7 Children and young people must be advised that there are no guarantees to confidentiality, where the school assesses them or others to be at actual or potential risk.
- 21.8 Children and young people who are looked after or looked after away from home, have the same rights to confidentiality with the same caveats in respect of assessed risk.
- 21.9 While it is essential that there is information brought to the attention of the Child Protection Coordinator from a wide range of sources, schools should have a protocol for sharing information within the school. This should include which members of staff are informed of investigations or action concerning a child or young person. However, it is appropriate to ensure all staff are aware when a child may need extra care and support, without necessarily being provided with full details of why this is required.

22.0 Escalation Policy

- 22.1 Where a member of staff makes a Child Protection referral but remains unsatisfied with the response from a member of staff or another agency, the Child Protection Coordinator should be informed. The case must be kept under review and the following procedures followed:



23.0 Adult Protection

23.1 Where a member of staff suspects an adult protection issue, they should contact the Adult Intake Service at Social Work on 0141 355 2200. An 'adult at risk' of harm is defined as a person aged 16 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, exploitation, or neglect, because of a:

- Disability
- Mental disorder
- Illness
- Physical or mental infirmity

24.0 Staff Support

24.1 It is essential to ensure that there are effective structures in place to support staff dealing with child protection issues, which may be highly stressful. For example:

- Annual reminders to all staff that they are operating within known and agreed local authority child protection procedures,
- Regular opportunities to discuss concerns about a child with the child protection coordinator,
- Specific support for any tasks such as completing Children's Hearing or Case Conference reports or attending such meetings,
- Senior management monitoring of workload to ensure additional pressures are kept to a minimum,
- Access to more specialists help through the Education Service or Social Work
- Appropriate debriefing of staff who have been involved in child protection investigations, and
- The offer of counselling or other support if required.

24.2 Staff Training

24.2.1 All staff, who have contact with children, should receive training in the form of:

- Induction training
- Annual refresher at the beginning of each session
- Access to specialised training provided by East Dunbartonshire Council and partner agencies, and Calendar of meetings of Child Protection Coordinators

24.2.2 Head Teachers/Heads of Centre, Child Protection Coordinators and other staff as designated by the Head Teacher will receive additional specialist training to support their role.

24.2.3 All staff must sign the school's training log annually to acknowledge they have received training on child protection procedures. The Child Protection Coordinator should ensure the Child Protection Training Log is signed and completed for each member of staff.

- 24.2.4 The Child Protection Coordinator should ensure all visiting staff and students within the school are briefed on child protection procedures as part of their induction procedures.
- 24.2.5 Head Teachers should be routinely advised of any developments.
- 24.3 Allegations Against Members of Staff
- 24.3.1 Should a member of staff receive information/allegations of abuse or inappropriate conduct against another member of staff, the Head Teacher must be informed immediately. The Head Teacher must then inform the Chief Education Officer immediately. Regulatory bodies such as GTC and SSSC will be informed by Teachers' Staffing.
- 24.3.2 It is vital to staff and children and young people that any action taken in response to information or allegations is conducted properly and promptly to support proper investigation.
- 24.3.3 After receiving initial information or hearing an allegation and establishing these are of a serious nature, further interviewing of the child is not appropriate other than by trained police officers or social workers, or during the legal process of prosecution. However, staff should gain sufficient information from the child to judge the seriousness of the issue, to inform senior managers' decisions.
- 24.3.4 Allegations against a Head Teacher, Team Leader, Manager or other officer within the education service should be directed straight to the Chief Education Officer.
- 24.4 Minimising Risk of Allegations
- 24.4.1 All staff should consider the appropriateness of their own and their colleagues' behaviour. Staff and pupils alike should feel confident in openly discussing behaviour which they do not like.
- 24.4.2 Where members of staff feel that their actions have been, or might have been, misinterpreted, they should make a written report to their line manager without delay.
- 24.5 Meetings with Children and Young People
- 24.5.1 Staff working alone with children and young people in a one-to-one setting should be aware of the risks involved in these situations and should take appropriate precautions:
- Ensure that other members of staff know where they are,
 - Do not meet out with hours or in quiet areas away from other people, and
 - If they feel uncomfortable about a particular situation report it to a more senior member of staff.
- 24.5.2 When providing personal care for disabled children and young people or reassurance or comfort when a child is distressed, physical contact should be minimal and respectful of the child's wishes.

25.0 Recruitment/ Use of Volunteers

- 25.1 Under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 individuals who work or volunteer with children and/or adults at risk of harm are required to join the PVG Scheme. Anyone with a known history of harmful behaviour is barred from the PVG Scheme and must not work with children and/or adults at risk of harm. An adult at risk of harm is defined as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with a type or care, health, or welfare service.
- 25.2 Once approved, individuals are provided with a certificate to state they are a member.
- 25.3 Thereafter, membership records are automatically updated if any new vetting information arises. Vetting information is conviction and non-conviction information held by agencies that is considered relevant.
- 25.4 It is also an offence for any individual on the list to ask to undertake work. Employers must report any incident especially ones which may lead to dismissal or to referral to the relevant bodies i.e. GTC and SSSC
- 25.5 The Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) scheme applies to all staff within Education as they are considered to undertake Regulated Work as part of their core duties.
- 25.6 Regulated work is the term used by the PVG Act to define the types of work which barred individuals must not do.

26.0 Appearing in Court

- 26.1 Should this be necessary, the Local Authority's Legal Services will ensure that any individual required to appear in court as part of a Child Protection investigation is offered support and guidance.
- 26.2 The Child Protection Coordinator should contact Legal Services directly to discuss individual arrangements.
- 26.3 Schools should ensure that families receive copies of the Child Protection Information Leaflet which details contact information, support agencies, timescales etc. This should include clear communication between staff when a family is the focus of concerns, to decide on an appropriate communication strategy.

27.0 Engagement with Partner Providers and Visitors to Schools

- 27.1 It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that any organisation or service engaged directly by schools and external to the Education Department:
 - Is fully briefed on the contents of this procedure manual, and
 - Has clear procedures and training in place to ensure the care and safety of children with whom they are working.
- 27.2 All parents, visitors to schools who have regular and sustained contact with children or who are required to supervise pupils must undergo an enhanced PVG (Protection of

Vulnerable Groups) check.

- 27.3 The Education Service will ensure that all authority engaged providers, including FE colleges and Early Years establishments will be provided with a copy of this procedure manual.

28.0 The Range of Ways in Which Children and Young People can be Abused

- 28.1 These Risk Indicators have been revised and updated within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 and are now separated into two categories as follows:

Impact on/ Abuse of the Child	Vulnerability Factor
Physical abuse	Services finding it hard to engage
Emotional abuse	Parent(s)/carer(s) with learning disability
Sexual abuse	Child affected by parent/carers mental ill-health
Criminal exploitation	Child experiencing mental health problems
Child trafficking	Domestic abuse
Neglect	Parental alcohol use
Female genital mutilation	Parental drug use
Honour-based abuse and/or Forced Marriage	Child displaying harmful sexual behaviour
Child sexual exploitation	Online safety
Internet-enabled sexual offending,	Other
Underage sex	
Other	

- 28.2 When a child's name is placed on the child protection register the Chair of the CPPM will identify the risk indicators that apply to the child and their circumstances. The risk indicators will be recorded on the child protection register.

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

- 28.4 Where does the Majority of Abuse/Neglect Occur?

Annual child protection statistics produced by the Scottish Government, show that most cases of abuse and neglect occur in the home and are a direct result of parents/carers (and other people who know children) wilfully abusing, or failing to attend to, the needs of their children.

Not all abuse is deliberate acts of harm, some are unintentional exposure to harm and while some are motivated by malice much is “ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances” who due to loss, bereavement, changes in lifestyle/circumstances place children in situations of actual/potential risk.

29.0 Definitions of Harm / Abuse

29.1 Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. It 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.

There may be some variation in family, community, or cultural attitudes to parenting, for example, in relation to reasonable discipline.

Cultural sensitivity must not deflect practitioners from a focus on a child’s essential needs for care and protection from harm, or a focus on the need of a family for support to reduce stress and associated risk.

29.2 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).

29.3 Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

CSA is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether 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 the child is aware of what is happening. For those who may be victims of sexual offences aged 16-17, child protection procedures should be considered. These procedures must be applied when there is concern about the sexual exploitation or trafficking of a child. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or nonpenetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of indecent images, in watching sexual 63 Child Protection Procedures Appendix A activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

29.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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.

The understanding of how risks towards the child occur and the complexities and distinct issues relating to this form of sexual abuse should be understood, recognised, and managed by the adults around the child.

If concern arises in relation to CSE reference should also be made to: Barnardos, Child Sexual Exploitation: Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation, A Practitioners' Resource Pack.

29.5 Sexual Extortion

There has been a large increase in reports of children and young people being forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand (such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card) after an offender has threatened to release nudes or semi-nudes of them.

This is financially motivated sexual extortion, a type of online blackmail often referred to in the media as 'sextortion'.

It is a form of child sexual abuse.

Financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by organised crime groups (OCGs) based overseas who are typically motivated by money. These groups target all ages and genders however, a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged 14-18.

29.6 Criminal Exploitation

Criminal Exploitation refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Violence or the threat of violence may feature. The victim may have been criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation may involve physical contact and may also occur using technology. It may involve gangs and organised criminal networks. Sale of illegal drugs may be a feature. Children and vulnerable adults may be exploited to move and store drugs and money. Coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons may be involved.

29.7 Child Trafficking

Child Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation.

Transfer or movement can be within an area and does not have to be across borders. Examples of and reasons for trafficking can include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage.

29.8 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. 'Persistent' means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused or is likely to cause significant harm. However, single instances of neglectful behaviour by a person in a position of responsibility can be significantly harmful. Early signs of neglect indicate the need for support to prevent harm. The GIRFEC framework sets out the essential wellbeing needs of all children.

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.

29.9 Neglect/Faltering Growth

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. 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.

29.10 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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 nonmedical 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.

29.11 Forced Marriage

This 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'.

29.12 Domestic Abuse

The Scottish Executive's Preventing Domestic Abuse – A National Strategy (2003) defines this type of abuse as:

"Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partner or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends.)"

Domestic abuse describes any behaviour that involves exerting control over a partner or ex-partner's life choices and that undermines their personal autonomy. It is an assault on their human rights.

Although most victims are women, men can also suffer domestic abuse, and it can also occur in same-sex relationships. Children and young people living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm, both because of witnessing the abuse and being abused themselves. Children can also be affected by abuse even when they are not witnessing it or being subjected to abuse themselves.

Domestic abuse can profoundly disrupt a child's environment, undermining their

stability and damaging their physical, mental, and emotional health.

The impact of domestic abuse on a child will vary, depending on factors including the frequency, severity, and length of exposure to the abuse and the ability of others in the household (particularly the non-abusive parent/carer) to provide parenting support under such adverse conditions.

If the non-abusive parent/carer is not safe, it is unlikely that the children will be. Indeed, children frequently come to the attention of practitioners when the severity and length of exposure to abuse has compromised the non-abusing parent's/carer's ability to nurture and care for them.

Where the child is known to social work, they will act as the lead professional in assessing the most effective response to the child. Where the child is not known to social services, as Named Person, Health will act as the lead agency for children under five years of age; and as Named Person, Education will act as the lead agency for school aged children.

29.13 Parental Substance Misuse

Substance misuse often coincides with the impact of trauma for the people who use addiction to cope with/overcome adversities. However, parents and carers who have a substance use problem can have chaotic, unpredictable lifestyles and may struggle to recognise and meet their children's needs. This may result in their children being at risk of harm.

Possible effects on children can include:

- Harmful physical effects on unborn and new-born babies,
- Impaired patterns of parental care with a higher risk of emotional and physical neglect and abuse,
- Chaotic lifestyles, which disrupt children's routines and relationships, leading to early behavioural and emotional problems,
- Family income may be diverted to buy alcohol or drugs, leading to poverty, debt and material deprivation,
- Unstable accommodation or homelessness as a consequence of anti-social behaviour orders, rent arrears or conviction for alcohol or drugs related offences,
- Children having inappropriately high levels of responsibility for social or personal care of parents with problem substance use, or care of younger siblings,
- Isolation of children and inability to confide in others for fear of the consequences,
- Threat of domestic violence,
- Disrupted schooling,
- Children's early exposure to, and socialisation into, illegal substance misuse and other criminal activity,
- Parents' reduced awareness or loss of consciousness may place children at physical risk in the absence of another adult who is able to supervise and care for them, and

- Careless storage of medication and disposal of needles and syringes may cause accident or overdose.
(Source: Getting Our Priorities Right, Scottish Executive, 2003)

29.14 Fabricated or Induced Illness

Fabricated or induced illness in children is not a common form of child abuse, but practitioners should nevertheless be able to understand its significance. Although it can affect children of any age, fabricated and induced illness is most identified in younger children. Where concerns do exist about the fabrication or induction of illness in a child, practitioners must work together, considering all the available evidence, to reach an understanding of the reasons for the child's signs and symptoms of illnesses. A careful medical evaluation is always required to consider a range of possible diagnoses and a range of practitioners and disciplines will be required to assess and evaluate the child's needs and family history.

30.0 Children who are Care Experienced

Some children who have experienced abuse or neglect may require to be looked after by the Local Authority either at home or away from home.

Schools' and other agencies' responsibilities towards Looked After Children are outlined in The Education of Children and Young People Looked After By East Dunbartonshire Council, Joint Protocol between Education and Social Work (December 2012)

The Who Cares? Scotland report 'Feeling Safe?' highlighted the fact that children and young people who are Looked After do not always feel safe and that they are at risk of misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming and prostitution. School staff should be alert to this range of possible child protection issues.

If any staff member has a child protection concern about a child whom they know to be Looked After they should ensure that the child's named social worker, is notified without delay.

31.0 Exclusion

Children who have suffered abuse and/or are under considerable stress may show their hurt by behaviours which are highly disruptive and sometimes damaging to themselves, to other children and to property. There are many excellent examples of mainstream schools managing the balance between progressing the interests of the majority of their pupils, whilst meeting the needs of children and young people who exhibit very challenging behaviour.

Nevertheless, schools can experience considerable difficulty in responding to these behaviours in terms of their general expectations of pupil behaviour and the safety of other children.

Where school staff contemplate the exclusion of a child who is the subject of child protection concerns, they must first contact the child's social worker/team leader and

carry out a risk assessment which requires the identification of plans to address any difficulties relating to home circumstances which would be likely to arise from exclusion.

32.0 Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs

- 32.1 Children and young people with additional support needs and particularly those with multiple disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse.
- 32.2 The definition of 'disabled children' includes children and young people with a range of impairments with physical, emotional, developmental, learning, communication, and health care needs.

This includes, but is not limited to, young carers, armed forces children, children and young people who experience inequality and adversity in relation to their sex, gender reassignment, race, sexual orientation, experience of poverty, refugee, asylum or immigration status, children and young people with experience of care, children and young people in conflict, or at risk of being in conflict.

- 32.3 There is a strong association between childhood disability and maltreatment and the abuse of disabled children is significantly under-reported.

Disabled children are more likely to be dependent on support for communication, mobility, manual handling, intimate care, feeding and/or invasive procedures. There may be increased parental stress, multiple carers, care in different settings (including residential) and often reluctance among adults to believe that disabled children are abused.

Disabled children are also likely to be less able to protect themselves from abuse and limited mobility can add to their vulnerability. In addition, the network of carers around the child is likely to be larger than for a non-disabled child, which can be a risk factor. While most parents/carers who are part of such a team demonstrate the highest standard of care for their child, some could themselves be perpetrators. Particularly vulnerable are those children with communication or sensory impairments, behavioural disorders or learning disabilities.

Abuse of disabled children is more likely to start at an earlier age and repeated multiple abuses are evident. Neglect is the most frequently reported form of abuse, followed by emotional abuse.

- 32.4 When responding to concerns about a disabled child, expertise in child protection and disability should be brought together to ensure the child receives the same standard of service as a non-disabled child. Practitioners experienced in working with disabled children, such as speech and language therapists or residential workers, may be helpful to participate in the investigative process.
- 32.5 Practitioners responsible for making enquiries into a child protection concern should be aware of non-verbal communication systems when they might be useful and how to access them and should know how to contact suitable interpreters or facilitators. Assumptions should not be made about the inability of a disabled child to give credible evidence or withstand the rigours of the court process. Each child should be assessed

carefully and supported to participate in the process when this is in the child's best interest.

33.0 Underage Sexual Activity

- 33.1 In some cases, the activity will be wholly consensual; with others, it will happen in response to peer pressure or as the result of abuse or exploitation. Young people who are sexually active will, therefore, have differing needs, so services and practitioners must provide a range of responses. National guidance provided by the Scottish Government covers the legal issues and advises practitioners how they can strike a balance between assuring the freedom of young people to make decisions and protecting them from activity which could give rise to immediate harm and/or longer-term adverse consequences. Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009.
- 33.2 The law is clear that society does not encourage sexual intercourse in young people under 16. However, it does not follow that every case presents child protection concerns and it is important that a proportionate response is made. If there are no child protection concerns, there may still be needs to be addressed either on a single agency or multiagency basis.
- 33.3 However, child protection measures must be instigated:
- if the child is, or is believed to be, sexually active and is 12 or under,
 - if the young person is currently 13 or over but sexual activity took place when they were 12 or under, and where the 'other person' is in a position of trust in relation to the young person.
 - When staff become aware that a young person is sexually active or is likely to become sexually active, they should undertake an assessment of risks and needs so that the appropriate response can be provided. The practitioner has a duty of care to ensure that the young person's health and emotional needs are addressed and to assess whether the sexual activity is of an abusive or exploitative nature. This process may not always be straightforward, so it will require sensitive handling and the use of professional judgment.
- 33.4 Please refer to the EDC inter-agency joint protocol and Sexual Health Policy.
- 33.5 Problematic Sexual Behaviour
- 33.5.1 In all cases where a child or young person displays problematic sexual behaviour (PSB), immediate consideration should be given to whether action needs to be taken under child protection procedures, either to protect the victim or to tackle concerns about what has caused the child/young person to behave in such a way.
- 33.5.2 The East Dunbartonshire Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework and Protocol for children with sexually harmful behaviours should be applied in both Child Protection and welfare cases. It is intended to help inform decisions about the management of risk within the context of a Child's Plan.
- 33.5.3 This risk management protocol reflects two key aims of addressing sexually harmful

behaviour:

- risk management and risk reduction

33.5.4 Risk management is supported by the following essential elements:

- risk management is embedded in the systems around the child and promoted by those who supervise and monitor the child daily; and
- safety plans are drawn up in the relevant environments (for example, home, schools, communities, and residential units).

33.5.5 Risk reduction is outlined within a 'phased approach' detailed in the risk management framework. This process supports the child's progress towards ultimately taking responsibility to manage their own risk and is placed clearly within the context of intervention. This ensures the child is helped to develop skills, opportunities and understanding to reduce their need to engage in further sexually harmful behaviour.

34.0 Children and Young People who present a risk of serious harm

In some instances, the harm caused by one child to another extends beyond bullying. This may occur when one child seriously physically or sexually assaults another.

Where this is alleged, child protection referrals should be made for both the victim and the alleged abuser. Research from work with adult sexual abusers has shown that many began abusing in childhood or adolescence. Children who are abusive towards other children require comprehensive assessment and therapeutic intervention and programmes to address their welfare needs as well as their criminal and sexually aggressive behaviours. The establishment should also undertake a risk assessment to consider whether additional procedures need to be put in place to protect other children.

35.0 Online and mobile phone child safety

New technologies and digital media are an integral part of children's lives. Whether accessing a computer at school or at home, a games console or mobile phone, children and young people are increasingly accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are. This has enabled entirely new forms of social interaction to emerge, for example, through social networking websites and online gaming. But these new technologies also bring a variety of risks, such as:

- exposure to obscene, violent, or distressing material,
- bullying or intimidation through email and online (cyber-bullying),
- identity theft and abuse of personal information, and
- exploitation by online predators - for example, sexual grooming and sextortion - often through social networking sites

Where police undertake investigations into online child abuse, or networks of people accessing, or responsible for, images of sexually abused children, consideration must be given to the needs of the children involved. This may include children or young

people who have been victims of the abuse or children and/or young people who have close contact with the alleged perpetrator. In many cases, they will have been targeted because they were already vulnerable. Local services need to consider how they can best support and coordinate any investigations into such offences. They should understand the risks that these technologies can pose to children and the resources available to minimise those risks.

Children and young people need to understand the risks the internet and mobile technology can pose so that they can make sensible and informed choices. Practitioners and carers need to support young people to use the internet and mobile technology responsibly and know how to respond when something goes wrong.

Refer to Procedure Manual 3/42 Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils in East Dunbartonshire Schools.

36.0 Child protection themes

The themes that have been recurrent in this Guidance may be summarised as follows:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Information sharing that is protective must be relevant, proportionate, accurate, timely, necessary, and lawful.
4. Multidisciplinary assessment of risk and strength should be structured and formed in collaboration between professionals, child, and family and using the GIRFEC framework. 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.
5. 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.
6. Practical help that is responsive to need also involves qualities in professional relationship, including reliability, honesty, respect, care, accessibility, and encouragement.
7. 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.

Appendix 1: Related Documentation

[SNCT Handbook](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Child Protection Procedures EDCPC 2023

Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014. (Additional notes for practitioners: protecting disabled children from abuse and neglect).

West of Scotland Child Protection Procedures 2011

[West of Scotland Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures](#)

Administration of Medicines

[Educating Children of Armed Services Personnel](#)

[Children's Hearings](#) (SCRA)

[Children and Families Affected by Substance Misuse](#)

Children (Scotland) Act (1995)

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act (2003)

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme (2011)

The Children and Young People's Act (2014)

#KeepThePromise

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Getting it Right for Every Child

Additional Support for Learning Act (amended 2009)

Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Data Protection Act 2018.

Children's Charter (2004)

Appendix 2: Notification of Concern Shared Referral Form

PM 3/21/F01 Notification of Concern Shared Referral Form: Child Protection Vulnerable Young Persons

Appendix 3: Risk Assessment - Sexually Harmful Behaviours

PM 3/21/F02 Risk Assessment – Sexually Harmful Behaviours