POLICY DOCUMENT

Safeguarding
PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE
AND CHILDREN

Last Reviewed July 2018

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Safeguarding Protection of Children and Young People

Policy and Procedures

Revised July 2018
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Introduction

This document sets out the Policy and Procedures for the Royal Blind School (across all areas and departments) in relation to safeguarding (promoting the welfare of children, young people and protected adults) and the protection of children and young people. Implementation of this policy and procedure should help to ensure that any pupil attending the Royal Blind School, who may be at risk of harm from abuse or neglect, receives appropriate and timely help in line with current national legislation and best practice in the protection of vulnerable groups.


Purpose and Scope

This guideline should ensure that all staff and volunteers are clear on the measures within the Royal Blind School for protecting pupils. Child protection arises when an individual requires protection from abuse or neglect, or, may arise where a risk assessment has identified a significant likelihood or risk of abuse or neglect. Abuse may consist of sexual exploitation, physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse; however, bullying, victimisation, modern day slavery, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, cyber bullying and harassment from others are also included.

The policy statement and procedures apply to all pupils attending the Royal Blind School (full and part-time), irrespective of age.

There are four main sections to this policy and procedure:

- **Part 1** - Policy on Protecting Children and Young People
- **Part 2** - Roles and Responsibilities for implementing the Royal Blind School’s Policy and Procedures on Protecting Children and Young People
- **Part 3** - Procedures on Safe Guarding and Protecting Children and Young People taking account of national legislation
- **Part 4** - Appendices.

The policy statement and procedures also apply to all ‘staff’, for example, employees, contractors and volunteers who undertake work on behalf of the school. Where elements of the policy and procedures relate solely to salaried staff, the term “employees” will indicate this. All staff of the Royal Blind School (including non-teaching staff) will receive regular updates on the importance of this policy through induction and staff development opportunities.

Who is a Child?

Although legal definitions vary, for the purposes of this policy, pupils within the Royal Blind School, up to and beyond the age of 18 years who remain enrolled as pupils, are regarded children and young people. The priority within the Royal Blind School is to ensure that any vulnerable young person, who is, or may be at risk, is supported and protection.
The definition of a “child” within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines a child as someone who has not attained the age of 18 years in relation to the Named Person legislation (this has not been fully implemented).

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to anyone under the age of 18, unless common practice under the law applicable to the child is applied.

The Health and Social Care Standards Glossary defines a Child: Birth and 16 years and a young person aged between: 16 – 21 years. (Scottish Government, June 2017)

The vulnerability of children and young people with disabilities

Evidence shows that children and young people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse, both within their family and in institutional settings. Factors giving rise to this include (for example):

- The need for high levels of support (including intimate care) provided by a number of carers;
- The need to sometimes use interventions such as medication and physical restraint, which can potentially be inappropriately and sometimes abusively administered;
- Negative associations made about people with a disability which may lead to them being seen as ‘objects of concern’ rather than people and subjects of their own lives;
- Communication difficulties which may make it hard for a child/young person to communicate their needs, tell someone that they are being harmed and/or make a complaint;
- Resistance to believing a child/young person when they do allege abuse (i.e. the ‘naïve’ view that no-one would seek to harm or abuse a child or young person with a disability);
- Limited life experiences which can lead to a lack of awareness in relation to personal boundaries (e.g. physical, emotional and sexual) and of what is considered to be acceptable and unacceptable behaviour;
- Considering distressed behaviour as the ‘norm’ for an individual and therefore masking the reality that he/she is experiencing abuse.

Support for children and young people

When considering the care and protection needs of its pupils, the Royal Blind School recognises the tensions that can result when working to support children and young people’s rights to self-determination and personal choice, with their right to protection from harm, neglect and exploitation. These rights are enshrined in Scotland’s
Charter for Protecting Children and Young People (Scottish Government, 2004) – the Charter (See page 8 below). The School recognises that balancing these rights when a protection concern arises is not always easy. The first priority for all staff will be to ensure the safety and protection of pupils. It is essential that staff understand their Duty of Care and follow the Policy and Procedures on the Protection of Children and Young People whenever there is a concern that any pupil of the school may be at risk of harm.

School staff will also ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn about their rights, and about appropriate personal interactions, where to go for help if at risk. The GIRFEC framework and the Equality Act 2010 embed our practice to ensure that pupils are nurtured and have positive experiences enabling them to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

In seeking to ensure that these rights are upheld, the School will consult with other agencies about the most appropriate way of protecting children and enabling them to have their views and opinions heard.

Information for parents/carers

A summary of the School’s Policy and Procedures on Safeguarding Protection of Children and Young Adults will be distributed to families at the beginning of each school session and is available on the School’s webpage.

Monitoring and evaluation

There are many processes (both formal and informal) which work together to ensure that all pupils at the School are safe from harm. These are consistent with Scottish Government guidelines and include:

- Regular meetings of care and education staff
- Allocation of a key worker/form teacher to every child at the school
- Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs)
- Care Plans; and Person Centred Plans
- Medical Care Plans
- Individual Risk Assessments
- Recording and reporting of all incidents and concerns in line with school procedures
- Reporting and recording of all protection concerns to the Head Teacher irrespective of the level of concern
- On-going monitoring of low-level care and welfare concerns;
- Discussions with parents/carers (where appropriate);
- Monitoring and review of protection issues which have been reported to the social service agencies with responsibility for the protection of children and young people
- Regular review of Safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Regular mandatory Safeguarding training for all staff
Policy context

This policy and procedures sit within the context of the Royal Blind School’s care and protection policy framework, including:

- Safe recruitment procedure (including PVG)
- Professional Codes of Conduct (SSSC and GTCS)
- Grievance, Disciplinary and Whistle-blowing Procedures
- Confidentiality policy
- A range of everyday safe practice guidelines/procedures.

The Royal Blind School
Core values in relation to the protection of children and young people

The Royal Blind School believes that its children and young people have a right to dignity, privacy, confidentiality (taking full account of the GDPR, May 2018). These core values alongside the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) outlined in ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ (GIRFEC) and the Health and Social Care Standards (Scottish Government) should underpin all aspects of the school’s work. In relation to its care and protection work, these core values underpin the way in which the school:

- manages protection concerns
- provides intimate care
- communicates with pupils both verbally and non-verbally
- promotes anti-discriminatory practices relating to ‘race’, culture, religious belief, linguistic background, disability, gender, and sexuality
- promotes an environment free from bullying and harassment
- manages personal and sensitive data about pupils and their parents/carers.
- ensures that appropriate measures are taken to safeguard young people’s finances
- uses safe holding
The *Charter* consists of 13 declarations, presented as statements from children and young people to adults; these are:

- “Get to know us”
- “Speak with us”
- “Listen to us”
- “Take us seriously”
- “Involve us”
- “Respect our privacy”
- “Be responsible to us”
- “Think about or lives as a whole”
- “Think carefully about how you use information about us”
- “Put us in touch with the right people”
- “Use your power to help”
- “Make things happen when they should”
- “Help us be safe.”
Part 1: Policy on Safeguarding, Protecting Children and Young People

The Royal Blind School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all pupils. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm including abuse, neglect and any form of exploitation.

The Royal Blind School will:

- ensure that all staff understand their professional and contractual obligations to provide a duty of care to its pupils and to protect pupils from harm, and to fairly and consistently implement all policies and procedures
- ensure that all pupils are aware of their rights, appropriate interpersonal relationships and safeguarding behaviours, and that pupils know where to go for help if they feel they are at risk
- ensure that all staff recognise the limits of their responsibilities in relation to the management of protection concerns and report such concerns according to the procedures and in-line with the referral process (detailed at Appendix 2)
- ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in policies and procedures relating to the care and protection of pupils as outlined in Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life (Scottish Government, June 2017)
- ensure that pupils are appropriately and sensitively supported to express their ideas, views and concerns on a wide range of issues, including protection issues
- ensure that the parents/carers of pupils are fully aware of their rights to express any concerns they may have about care and protection issues relating to their child
- ensure that all staff understand the limits to confidentiality and that these limits are communicated to pupils and parents/carers
- provide opportunities for all staff to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of pupils
- fully support staff who follow the school’s Protection policy and procedures
- endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to protection issues
Part 2: Roles and responsibilities for implementing the Royal Blind School’s Safeguarding & Protection of Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

The Head Teacher will:

- act as the Royal Blind School’s Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People during the school day (9am – 4pm). The Head of Care (Children and Adult Services) will act as the Royal Blind School’s Lead Professional between the hours of 4pm – 9am
- ensure that the Protection of Children and Young People procedure is regularly reviewed and meets the requirements of national best practice
- identify resources to facilitate the development of effective and regular Protection training and staff development
- respond appropriately to individual protection concerns
- ensure that the Royal Blind School is appropriately represented at any conferences and working groups etc. which relate to the care and protection of children and young people, and in particular those which relate to the protection of children with disabilities and children in residential school accommodation

The Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People will:

- treat all protection concerns as a matter of urgency
- speak with the reporting staff member and any other staff as considered necessary
- ensure that the internal reporting procedure (see Appendix 2) is understood and applied by all staff
- report concerns of abuse to the relevant protection agencies
- liaise with other relevant agencies to ensure that the protection investigation and response is well coordinated, appropriate and effective
- consider when and how to contact a pupil’s parents/carers and, where required, seek advice on this matter from the relevant protection agencies
- determine the need for on-going monitoring of possible ‘low-level’ protection concerns with relevant staff
- ensure that relevant information about care and protection concerns relating to a pupil are communicated to relevant staff on a ‘need-to-know’ basis
- ensure that protection records are managed in accordance with the school’s Confidentiality Policy and the General Data Protection Regulations introduced on 25 May 2018
- ensure that 24 hour cover is available, so that staff (particularly care staff) are able to report urgent protection concerns to the Lead Professional
Members of the Senior Leadership Team* will:

a) ensure that all staff understand the implications of the Protection policy procedure
b) ensure that the Protection policy and procedure is covered (as appropriate) within employee induction and training programmes;
c) ensure that all external workers (including volunteers) who work directly with children and young people, are aware of the school’s Protection policy and procedure and understand the obligation on them to report any concerns in line with the procedure
d) ensure that in the course of regular supervision, staff meetings etc., regular opportunities are provided to raise general and non-urgent issues relating to the care and protection of children and young people
e) ensure that any concerns raised by staff that suggest that a child or young person is at risk of abuse are passed to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People
f) ensure that any allegations involving a staff member harming a child or placed a child at risk of harm, are passed immediately to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People
g) ensure that appropriate cover is provided to allow employees to attend relevant Protection training
h) ensure that any practice issues which relate to the implementation of care and protection procedures are passed to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People
i) ensure that Risk Assessments are reviewed, updated, communicated and implemented to minimise future risk of harm

*The Senior Leadership Team: Head Teacher, Head of Care (Children and Adult Services), Care Manager and two Depute Head Teachers.

Staff (including contracted and volunteer workers where appropriate) will:

- fulfil their obligations in relation to the care and protection of children and young people
- make a positive contribution to the development of the school’s Protection policy and practice
- report immediately any concerns that a child/young person could be at risk of harm to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People
- be pro-active in identifying and discussing care and protection practice/procedural issues with their line manager
- participate fully in any Protection training opportunities provided by the Royal Blind School and/or other agencies/organisations
- review Risk management strategies to minimise the future risk of harm
Royal Blind School staff members will:

- work together to assess needs and risks;
- share information;
- jointly plan; and
- demonstrate that services are provided in a co-ordinated way.

**Reports to senior staff (including the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People)**

When a report of an allegation/concern of risk of harm is made the reporting staff member will receive assurance that their concern is taken seriously and managed according to the school’s Protection policy and procedure.

If the reporting person is not satisfied with the response to their concern, s/he should discuss this directly with the Lead Professional.

Where the concern relates to the way in which the Lead Professional has received/managed a report about a Protection matter, the staff member should discuss his or her concern with another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Following this, and in the unlikely event that concerns by the reporting staff member continue, s/he should make a report directly to the Chief Executive, Royal Blind.
Part 3: The Royal Blind School's Safeguarding and Protection Procedure

Responding to an allegation of abuse made by a child or young person

Incidents that potentially put a child or young person at risk of harm may relate to another child, a young person or an adult, or may relate to concerns within or out with the school.

When dealing with an allegation of abuse, staff should take the following steps:

- **Listen attentively** to what the young person is saying
- **Affirm the young person’s feelings** as expressed by them (show empathy)
- **Ask open, non-leading questions** which help to clarify what the young person is saying but do not lead into an investigative situation. Do not use direct or closed questions, which put suggestions to the young person when dealing with an allegation of abuse. This is most important as inappropriate or intrusive questioning, is not in the young person’s best interest and may contaminate a subsequent Protection investigation. It is important that the young person is not subjected to a series of interviews by different adults
- **Re-assure the young person** that s/he has been courageous in ‘telling’.
- **Do not promise confidentiality.** At any time during a discussion with a young person, ‘staff’ should not agree to keep secret any information indicating that the young person could be at risk of harm. Please explain that while every effort to respect a desire for confidentiality is made, if there is cause for concern, necessary information will be passed to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People
- **If the young person decides to withdraw at this stage, the adult should stress that they can have further discussions in the future and that there will always be someone to listen to them.** They should also be given alternative sources of support such as the telephone number of **ChildLine – 0800 11 11**
- **Do not make value judgements** about an allegation regarding the ‘abuser’ or what has reportedly taken place. Doing this will not help a young person.
- **Treat the allegation very seriously** and report it immediately to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People (Appendix 2).
- **Explain the next step.** However, any information given to a young person about the child protection or adult support and protection process should always be communicated carefully, with sensitivity and be appropriate to the young person’s age, stage of development and level of understanding. Such
communication should not breach the confidentiality of any other parties involved.

- **Complete a Protection recording form** (Appendix 3). It is important to record only what the young person told you (if the allegation is verbal) and the words that s/he used. If the allegation came to light through other contexts (e.g. drama, play etc.), include any original material (if available) with the completed pro-forma. A copy of the record may be required (at a later date) as part of the Protection process or as evidence for future criminal prosecution.

- **Do not speak with the young person’s parent/carer** unless directed to do so by the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People. The decision about when and how to speak with a young person’s parents/carers rests with the Lead Professional who may need to take advice from the Protection agencies or Police before making contact with parents/carers.

- **Ask for support.** There is recognition that dealing with Protection concerns can have stressful consequences for staff. The Royal Blind School will ensure that staff who have reported/are involved in child protection concerns receive appropriate support.

- **Please remember:** The notes from conversation with the child or young person must be reported to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People

**NB:** The Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People is responsible for making referrals/seeking advice from Social Work, the Police and/or the Local Authority and for ensuring that referrals for medical examination/treatment from the appropriate agencies are progressed.

**Responding to general concerns of abuse (including monitoring of concerns)**

Apart from a direct allegation of abuse, child protection issues may arise through staff noting possible ‘signs and indicators’ of abuse (Appendix 1). The Royal Blind School will ensure that all staff who work with children and young people have regular opportunities to consider how the various signs and indicators of abuse present themselves.

The presence of ‘signs and indicators’ can require an immediate and urgent response on the part of the school. However, in some situations the school may decide to monitor concerns for a short time period and implement the monitoring framework. (Appendix 4).

Where the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People determines that concerns require monitoring, s/he will ensure that:
• relevant staff are informed of the need to monitor
• staff understand why the decision to monitor has been made
• agree a review date with relevant staff
• staff involved in monitoring concerns are provided with appropriate support and advice
• the involvement of the parents/carers in the monitoring process are carefully made so as not to compromise any future Protection process

Dealing with third party reports of abuse

Staff who receive a report of abuse from a ‘third party’ should explain that all concerns are progressed in accordance with the Royal Blind School's Protection of Children and Young People policy.

If a third party decides to withdraw their concern at this point, they should be informed that where the information shared indicates that a child or young person could be at risk of harm, the information will be passed on without their agreement.

Dealing with an allegation of historical abuse

When dealing with current personal concerns relating to their child, some parents/carers may themselves disclose that they were victims of past abuse. Reports of historical abuse are serious and must always be brought to the attention of the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People, and communicated via the referral process detailed at Appendix 2.

If the possibility exists that the alleged abuser may still pose a risk to children and/or other vulnerable groups, the Lead Professional for the Protection of children and Young People will make a report to the relevant Protection agencies.

Allegations/concerns of possible abuse is reported which may implicate a staff member

Allegations of abuse, which implicate a member of staff undertaking work on behalf of the Royal Blind School, should be reported immediately to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People.
Allegations made against employees of the Royal Blind School

Any suspicion or complaint that an employee is associated with the abuse of a pupil or young person (including a child/young person out with the school context) will be progressed in accordance with the following guidance:

- **An allegation of abuse that implicates any member of staff other than a member of the Senior Leadership Team:**
  - The concern must be reported to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People via their line manager

- **An allegation of abuse that implicates a member of the Senior Leadership Team other than the Head Teacher or Head of Care (Children and Adult Services):**
  - The member of staff who has the concern must report it directly to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People. Staff must not discuss their concern with the senior member of staff who is implicated in the allegation

- **An allegation of abuse that implicates the Head Teacher or Head of Care (Children and Adult Services):**
  - The member of staff must report their concern to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who must then report immediately to the Convener of the Education Executive Committee and the Chief Executive of Royal Blind

The Royal Blind School recognises that it has a Duty of Care to its employees. Employees alleged to have abused pupils, pending the outcome of any enquiries, will be treated with appropriate consideration.

Volunteers

Although volunteers do not have formal employment rights, where an allegation of abuse cites a volunteer worker; the above procedure will be followed.

Contracted workers from external organisations

Where an allegation regarding a contracted worker who is employed by an external organisation but undertaking work on behalf of the Royal Blind School, the onus is on the external organisation to manage the allegation against their employee. However, the Royal Blind School recognises that it has a primary Duty of Care to its pupils. This means that the school will, where appropriate, report such an allegation to the relevant Protection agencies.
Independent freelance workers undertaking work for the Royal Blind School

Where an allegation is made against an independent freelance worker, the school will, where appropriate, report the allegation to the relevant Protection agencies.

NB: The Royal Blind School has the right to suspend any contracts with individuals and organisations during a Protection investigation.

Contacting the Protection agencies

Whenever staff of the Royal Blind School suspect that a pupil could be at risk of harm, the Lead Professional will seek advice from the relevant Protection agencies within the pupil’s Local Authority.

In most instances, the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People will seek advice/make a referral to Social Work services. However, s/he may also contact the Police where there are urgent circumstances such as:

- the immediate avoidance of further abuse
- the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser
- the avoidance of the destruction of evidence
- the need for Emergency Protection Measures
- where a child may have been harmed by a person unknown to the child and their family

The Lead Professional will contact the Social Work/Police/Local Authority that covers the area of the pupil’s home address; contact details of relevant agencies above will be provided, where appropriate. These will maintained by the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young people.

Supporting a child or young person following a concern/allegation of abuse

Following the reporting of a concern/allegation of abuse it may be appropriate for the child or young person to receive support, either, from a member of the School staff or from an appropriately skilled individual from an external organisation. The Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People may seek advice from Social Work on the most appropriate way of providing such support.

The School fully supports a young person’s right to express their views and opinions when they are the subject of a Protection investigation; it also recognises that support MUST be provided by a person who has a good understanding of the child protection process and who will work in a way that does not compromise this process.

Support may involve:

- providing the child/young person with the opportunity to express and explore feelings
• helping the child/young person to develop a sense of self-worth and belonging
• helping the child to explore the meaning of boundaries and rights to personal safety in relation to others
• providing opportunities to promote potential across all areas of development

Rationale for the Royal Blind School’s ‘internal’ Protection referral process (Appendix 2)

The basis for the school’s internal referral process is on the premise that staff at all levels will have the confidence to share all Protection concerns with their immediate line manager. It is crucial that staff understand that irrespective of the staff level at which a concern is raised and/or the perceived severity of the concern, it will always be taken to the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People. It is the responsibility of the Lead Professional to discuss the nature of the concern with relevant staff and to decide on the most appropriate way forward.

All staff should be aware that Protection concerns usually involve the sharing of highly confidential and often sensitive and ambiguous information about an individual that must be managed carefully, with due regard for privacy and confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 inclusive of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (May 2018).

Recording Child Protection concerns using the recording form (Appendix 3)

Whenever a Protection concern arises, staff will complete relevant sections of the Protection forms. In some instances, it will only be necessary to complete sections A and B. The form shown at Appendix 3 will provide a complete unbroken record of the action taken by the Royal Blind School in relation to each Protection concern.

The member of staff who initiated the concern should complete Section A of the form. On receiving a concern from a member of staff, the Care Manager and/or DHT will record the key issues surrounding the concern.

The Lead Professional (or other designated member of staff) will complete Sections B, C and D of the recording form. In order to complete section B, the Lead Professional will have discussed the concern with a number of relevant staff (as detailed in the referral process. (Appendix 2).

Issues of confidentiality in Safeguarding/Protection work

Personal information about young people and families held by the Royal Blind School is subject to a legal duty of confidentiality (Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR (2018), and will not normally be disclosed without the consent of the persons concerned.

Young people are entitled to the same duty of confidentiality as adults, provided they have the ability to understand the choices and their consequences relating to the proposed lines of action.
Where there is no consent, the law permits disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or young person where s/he may be, or is, at risk. Each such disclosure should be justifiable according to the particular circumstances.

Within the context of work undertaken by the Royal Blind School, confidentiality is not an option where a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff have a professional and moral duty to put the young person’s welfare first.

**Fear of defamation by staff**

Staff may be reluctant to report suspicions of abuse for fear that the person suspected will sue them for defamation, if the allegation turns out to be unfounded. To be defamatory, a statement must be untrue. Even if subsequently shown to be untrue, the statement will be protected by ‘qualified privilege’ if it is made to the appropriate authority in response to a duty, whether legal, moral or social, or in the protection of an interest. Qualified privilege will not apply when unjustified or malicious statements to or about other colleagues are made. If a statement, is untrue and motivated by malice, even to the appropriate authority then an act of defamation could be successful.

**Storage of and access to Protection records**

Completed Protection forms (and other relevant documentation) will be stored in locked filing cabinets within the Head Teacher’s offices. Access to this information will be restricted on a ‘need to know’ basis.

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**Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse**

**General definition of abuse**

“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.” National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)

**Physical abuse:**

Quite simply, causing physical harm to a child or young person, for example, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Abuse also arises when a parent/carer feigns the symptoms of an illness or deliberately causes ill health to a child.

**Possible signs and indicators of physical abuse**

- Injuries, particularly if they are recurrent
- Excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to explain and discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of medical help particularly on the part of the parent who may seem reluctant/make excuses for not taking a young person to the GP
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Black eyes
- Bruising on the soft parts of the body – thighs, upper arms, buttocks
- Bruising around the neck area
- Physical aggression towards others
- Physical aggression towards self – hitting and telling self-off for doing something wrong
- Chronic running away

**Checklist for possible signs of physical abuse**

It can be difficult to determine whether injuries to a young person are accidental or indicative of abuse.

Consideration of the following questions may prove helpful to staff, in particular the Lead Professional when s/he is considering a report of a concern of physical injury/abuse:

- Is the injury minor, superficial, treated and easily explained?
• Are the injuries typical of the developmental level of the child and its activities?

• Can the injury be explained by another cause e.g. known medical condition, skin condition, temporary illness?

• Do the young person and/or other individual consistent with the injury give the explanation?

• Is the injury on an area of the body, which could indicate a cause for concern? That is, those areas of the body which are not usually damaged by everyday accidents. For example, is the injury on the non-bony parts of the body such as eyes, side of face, ears, mouth, neck, upper/inner arms, chest, surface of the back, genitals, buttocks, thighs, soles of feet?

• Does the injury indicate cause for concern in terms of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Clear outline indicating young person could not pull away from source of injury.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pattern</td>
<td>Finger/thumb marks, cigarette burns, belt buckle, bite marks, bald patches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent and numerous</td>
<td>Old and new injuries at different healing stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusual</td>
<td>Position on body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not appropriate to young person’s age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More serious than would expect from an everyday accident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Physical neglect is defined as:

“Physical neglect occurs when a child’s essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothes, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.”

Possible signs and indicators of neglect

• Inappropriate dress for the weather
• Extremely dirty or unbathed
• Malnourished
• May steal food
• Is very demanding of affection or attention
• Has no understanding of basic hygiene
• Untreated medical problems
• Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
• Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults
• Poor school attendance or school performance
• Poor social skills
**Sexual abuse** is defined as:

Sexual abuse is any act that involves a child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not the child consents or not. It involves forcing or alluring a child to participate in sexual activities.

Involving children in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual exploitation may be indicated by the presence of one or more of the following characteristics:

- Lack of consent;
- Inequalities in terms of chronological age, developmental stage of stature;
- Actual or threatened coercion

**NB** Please see the Royal Blind’s School Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation

**Possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse**

**Young children may:**

- Become insecure or cling to parent in a fearful way
- Show extreme fear of a particular person
- Cry hysterically when their nappy is changed
- Become hysterical when clothing is removed particularly underclothes
- Have some physical signs in the genital or anal areas; smell of semen etc.
- Have soreness or bleeding in the throat, anal or genital area
- Regress to a much younger behavioural pattern
- Stare blankly, seem unhappy, confused, sad
- Become withdrawn, stop eating, have chronic nightmares, begin wetting again when previously dry
- Stop enjoying activities with other children, such as stories or games
- Seem to be bothered or worried
- Act in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults
- Behave in a sexually inappropriate way to their age, being obsessed with sexual matters as opposed to normal exploration
- Play out sexual acts in too knowledgeable a way with dolls or other children
- Produce drawings of sex organs such as erect penises
- Repeat obscene words of phrases
- Say repeatedly that they are bad, dirty or wicked
Older Children may:

- Hint about secrets they cannot tell
- Say that a friend has a problem
- Ask if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- Seem to be keeping secret something which is worrying them
- Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught
- Have unexplained sources of money
- Exhibit sudden inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn or regressing to younger behaviour patterns
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities such as music, sports, art, scouts, guides
- Be reluctant to undress for gym
- Have terrifying dreams
- Act in a sexual way, inappropriate to their age
- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse
- Start wetting themselves
- Have urinary infection, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas
- Have soreness of bleeding in the throat

Young people may:

- Be fearful about certain people like relatives of friends
- Assume the role of parents in the house to such an extent that they are taking care of everyone’s needs except their own
- Not be allowed to go out on dates or have friends round
- Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place
- Run away frequently
- Have unexplained sums of money
- Have recurring nightmares/be afraid of the dark
- Exhibit a sudden change in school/work habits, begin to truant
- Be fearful or undressing for games/gym
- Become withdrawn, isolated or excessively worried
- Have outbursts of anger or irritability
- Be chronically depressed
- Be suicidal
- Use drugs or drink to excess
- Self harm
- Develop eating disorders
- Exhibit inappropriate sexual/seductive behaviour
- Have recurrent genital/urinary/anal infections/bleeding
- Have chronic ailments such as stomach pains and headaches
- Become pregnant
- Have a friend who has a problem and then tell about the abuse of the friend
- Sexually abuse a child, sibling or friend
**Emotional abuse** is defined as:

Emotional abuse results through emotional neglect and adverse effects of children’s emotional development. It can involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child
- causing children to feel frightened or in danger
- rejected, denigrated or scapegoated;
- denied opportunities for exploration, play or socialisation appropriate to their stages of development;
- encouraged to engage in anti-social behaviour;
- put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety by the use of threats or practices designed to intimidate them;
- isolated from normal social experiences preventing the young person from forming friendships.

(P11, National Guidance for Child Protection 2014)

**Possible signs and indicators of emotional abuse**

- Fear of parents being contacted
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Physical, intellectual and emotional development lags
- Significant decline in concentration
- Sudden speech disorders
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour
- Self-harm
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging
- Indiscriminate friendliness
- Socio-emotional immaturity

**Domestic Abuse**

“This involves 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 occur in the same-sex relationships as well as
heterosexual ones. Children and young people living with Domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm, both as a result of witnessing the abuse and of 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 the stability and damaging their physical, mental and emotional health”.
Child protection Policy and procedure (Scot Gov 2015)

**Parental Substance Misuse**

Possible affects on young people 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;
- Young people having inappropriately high levels of responsibility for social or personal care of parents with problem substance use, or care of younger siblings;
- Isolation of young people and inability to confide in others for fear of the consequences;
- Threat of domestic violence;
- Disrupted schooling;
- Young people’s early exposure to, and socialisation into, illegal substance misuse and other criminal activity;
- Parents’ reduced awareness or loss of consciousness may place young person at physical risk in the absence of another adult who is able to supervise and care for them;
- Careless storage of medication and disposal of needles and syringes may cause accident or overdose.

**Female genital mutilation**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is described as ‘all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female organs for non-medical reasons’ World Health Organisation (WHO).

FGM has devastating physical, sexual and psychological consequences for girls and women in the short and long term. These include:

- Severe pain
- Blood loss and/or infection which can result in dealt
- Shock trauma
• Long lasting mental health issues
• Urinary and menstrual problems
• Painful sexual intercourse and decreased sexual enjoyment
• Problems in childbirth

Signs that FGM has taken place:

• Trouble walking, sitting, standing
• May spend longer in the toilet because of trouble urinating
• Frequent urinary or menstrual problems
• The person may confide in you
• May ask for help without being explicit owing to embarrassment or fear

Sources of information:

FGM helpline (0800 028 3550) or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

**Honour-based violence**

Honour based violence and abuse can take many forms e.g. threatening behaviour, assault, rape, kidnap, abduction, forced abortion, threats to kill and false imprisonment committed due to so called ‘honour’. Murders in the name of ‘so called’ honour (often called Honour killings) are murders in which predominately woman are killed for actual or perceived immoral behaviour which is deemed to have brought shame on the family. Some examples nationally of honour-based murders have been for trivial reasons, e.g. dressing or behaving too westernised, falling in love with somebody not chosen by their family, rejecting forced marriage or being LGBT.

**Internet Safety**

Defining and Differentiating ‘Online Risks’

Online risk can be classified in three ways:

**Content risk**: children receiving mass-distributed content. This may expose them to age-inappropriate material such as pornography, extreme violence, or content involving hate speech and radicalisation.

**Conduct risk**: children participating in an interactive situation. This includes bullying, sexting, harassing, being aggressive or stalking; or promoting harmful behaviour such as self-harm, suicide, pro-anorexia, bulimia, and illegal drug use or imitating dangerous behaviour. A child’s own conduct online can also make them vulnerable - for example, by over-sharing their personal information or by harassing or bullying themselves.

**Contact risk**: children being victims of interactive situations. This includes being bullied, harassed or stalked; meeting strangers; threats to privacy, identity and reputation (for example, through embarrassing photos shared without permission, a house location being identified, someone impersonating a user, users sharing information with strangers; and violence, threats and abuse directly aimed at individual users and/or groups of users.
Someone impersonating a user, users sharing information with strangers); and violence, threats and abuse directly aimed at individual users and/or groups of users. There are other risks associated with commerce such as online advertising and advertising to children. Please see the web addresses below.

**Illegal contact, conduct and content**

Some online risks may only lead to harm, but also result in illegal activity such as:

- sexual grooming and sexual exploitation;
- creation and distribution of child abuse images;
- online aspects of child trafficking;
- physical and mental abuse of children;
- selling and distributing illegal drugs; and
- revenge pornography, harassment and malicious communications.

Of course, many factors influence how potential online risks may or may not affect an individual child or young person. Their age, developmental stage and personal attitudes to risk all come into play. UK COUNCIL FOR CHILD INTERNET SAFETY

**For more information on the classification and definition of ‘online risks’, please see:**
http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39410/

**For more information on ‘self-harassment/bullying’ or ‘digital self-harm’ please see:**
http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=marc_reports
Appendix 2: Protection Protocol and referral process for the Royal Blind School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education (Within the school day)</th>
<th>NO investigation by any member of staff and NO discussion to be held with parents/carers until the concern has been discussed with the Lead Professional</th>
<th>Care staff (Out with the school day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An allegation/concern of abuse is noted by a member of staff, this should be reported to their Line Manager who in turn notifies the Head Teacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.</td>
<td>An allegation/concern of abuse is noted by a member of education staff who reports to their Line Manager who in turn notifies the Head Teacher. NO investigation by any member of staff and NO discussion to be held with parents/carers until the concern has been discussed with the Lead Professional.</td>
<td>An allegation/concern of abuse is noted by a member of staff, this should be reported to their Line Manager who in turn notifies the Head of Care (Children and Adult Services), or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lead Professional ensures that steps are taken/have been taken, to ensure the safety of the child or young person.

The Lead Professional reports the concern to the relevant Protection department within the pupil’s Local Authority. Advice may also be sought from the City of Edinburgh Children at Risk Hotline on 0131-200 2327.

The Lead Professional liaises with the relevant Social Work/Police/Local Authority office and seeks advice on how to manage the immediate situation particularly in relation to the parents/carers and the pupil(s). Having obtained guidance from the relevant external agencies, appropriate support is provided by the school. Risk assessments are updated as a matter of priority.

Unless it would place the child or young person at greater risk, or jeopardise an investigation, the Lead Professional informs the parents that a matter that might constitute a Protection concern involving their child has been noted and reported. The Lead Professional will then inform the parents as to what will happen next and continues to liaise with the parents throughout the investigation process.

The Lead Professional informs all other relevant agencies and continues to liaise with them throughout the investigation process.

The Lead Professional ensures that all discussions and meetings are appropriately documented and that all information pertaining to the Protection matter is securely filed.
Appendix 3: Protection Recording Form

**SECTION A** – to be completed by the member of staff who is concerned that a pupil could be at risk of harm.

**NB:** It is very important that the nature of the concern, particularly where it involves a direct allegation of abuse made by a pupil, is recorded by the person who first receives the concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Person’s name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.O.B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special circumstances relating to the young person’s (e.g. additional needs, medical condition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the grounds for concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please state if the concern is as a result of a direct allegation of abuse, as a result of observing possible signs and indicators etc. <strong>NB:</strong> This section should be completed by the member of staff who noted the concern/received the allegation of abuse from a pupil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature, name and role of the member of staff who first noted the concern/received the allegation from a pupil. <strong>Pass on to Line Manager/Member of Senior Leadership Team</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name and role of the Line Manager who received the notification of concern from staff. <strong>Pass on to Lead Professional (Head Teacher, during school day or Head of Care (Children and Adult Services) out with the school day).</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
SECTION B – to be completed by the Lead Professional for Protection of Children and Young People

Summary of discussion between Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People, other relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team and other school staff.

Record in this section the agreed next steps which may include (for example):

- discussion around more general care and welfare issues;
- an immediate referral to the Protection agencies;
- a discussion with the Protection agencies with a view to obtaining advice at this stage;
- further monitoring of any possible signs and indicators of abuse (which will be appropriately managed by relevant staff and set down within a clear timescale for review);
- any other action which is considered to be appropriate and in line with Protection best practice
- no further action.

Signed by the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young people

Name
Role
Date
### SECTION C – to be completed by the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child protection agencies/personnel contacted by the Lead Professional (state whether Social Work/Police/Local Authority and the address/phone number).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of discussion with, and advice given by, Protection agencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NB: In particular, note any advice given in relation to contact with the parents/carers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and designation of Protection personnel who received the concern and provided the advice.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and time of contact with the external Protection agencies.</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed by the Lead Professional for the Protection of Children and Young People</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Name |
| Role |
| Date |
**SECTION D – general information about the pupil**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address (including postcode)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of siblings (if known). <strong>To ensure that all children within situation are safe, relevant authorities informed.</strong></th>
<th>Date of birth of siblings</th>
<th>School of siblings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of parents/carers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address of parents/carers (including postcode)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone number of parents/carers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of any other individuals who have parental responsibility for the pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address (including postcode) of other individuals who have parental responsibility for the pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone number of above individuals</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note – The Royal Blind School will send a copy of the completed form to the relevant Protection agency/agencies who received/advised on the concern.
Appendix 4: Checklist for Monitoring Low Level Concerns

Section A: A record of the concern

As appropriate to the circumstances, this section should include details of:

- the nature of the concern
- where it took place
- when it took place
- with whom it took place
- its duration
- its intensity
- the sequence of events

Where appropriate record whether any of the following issues are relevant to the concern(s):

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Language
- Social interactions
- Drawings/writing/statements
- Physical indicators
- Relationships with parents/carers
- Relationships with workers

Section B: The monitoring Process

As appropriate to the circumstances, this section may include details of

- Any planning and review meetings
- The time scale agreed for monitoring the concern(s)
- The individuals involved in the monitoring process (e.g. staff, parents/carers, external agencies)
- Any action plan which has been developed
- Decision to continue/discontinue monitoring and justification for this
- Decision on whether to instigate Protection procedures or to re-contact Protection agencies for further consultation/referral

There is nothing more important than safeguarding and protecting children and it is everyone’s responsibility. ACT NOW if concerned.
References

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (Education Scotland, 2018)

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014)


Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 - Legislation.gov.uk

Health and Social Care Standards, My Support, my life (Scottish Government (2017)