

ARSDO Child Protection Policy

Child Protection

1. Introduction

Children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations. This policy guides the ARSDO in protecting those rights to help ensure that the child is kept safe. This helps our children have the best start in life, to flourish and become:

- Responsible citizens;
- Successful learners;
- Confident Individuals;
- Effective Contributors.

All staff working in the ARSDO has a part to play in ensuring that children are safe. It is therefore essential that everyone in the ARSDO Org is aware of the child protection policy and the part they need to play to protect children.

Staff and volunteers in ARSDO Org are well placed to observe physical, psychological or emotional changes in children that may indicate some form of child abuse. Also because of the close and trusting relationship that frequently exists between staff and pupils it may be that a child who is experiencing some form of abuse will share information in some way with them.

It is vital that all staff know what action to take should they have any concerns about a child or should they receive information which suggests that the child may be experiencing some form of abuse. The procedures outlined in this policy are designed both to safeguard the wellbeing of the child and to ensure that all ARSDO staff knows how to respond if they are concerned or become aware that a child may have been abused.

The ARSDO policy is therefore based on these guidelines. Policy in the area of Child Protection is underpinned, which includes 8 standards (see Appendix 3).

The ARSDO policy aims to provide clear and unambiguous guidance for staff. Should any aspect of the policy or the guidance within it be unclear to you then please contact the Management of ARSDO for Child Protection.

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The policy and associated procedures will be reviewed each year. Staff will receive a regular annual briefing on the policy, its operation and any amendments to it.

All staff will be issued with a Child Protection Information Leaflet. Staff and students joining the ARSDO during the session will be issued with the policy and leaflet as part of their induction and line managers should ensure this is the case.

2 Getting it Right for Every Child

All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs are met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their wellbeing is paramount.

It sets out a vision that we will:

- Put the child (and their family) at the centre of everything we (children's services) do.
- Provide earlier intervention in order to ensure that all children achieve their potential.
- Achieve the highest standards of joint working and collaboration to improve outcomes for children.
- Take personal responsibility for ensuring that all children achieve their potential.
- Focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Children and young people need to be **Safe, Healthy, Active, Achieving, Nurtured, Responsible, Respected and Included** (also known as **SHANARRI** or the Wellbeing Indicators) in order to achieve their potential.

The work on child protection that we carry out within partners is delivered to keep children **Safe**. Where we believe that a child may be at risk we will act quickly to use our child protection procedures to keep that child **Safe**. We will act to ensure that children are protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

3 What is Child Abuse and child neglect?

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, in the community or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

“Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission” (Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility”

The HEWAD Guidelines identify five categories of child abuse:

- Physical Injury
- Sexual abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional abuse or neglect
- Non-organic failure to thrive.

4 What is Child Protection

“All agencies, professional bodies and services that deliver adult and/or child services and work with children and their families have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement. They are expected to identify and consider the child’s needs, share information and concerns with other agencies and work collaboratively with other services (as well as the child and family) to improve outcomes for the child.”

5 Procedure for the management of Child Protection in the ARSDO

a) Designated Person

Each ARSDO is required to have a designated person responsible for the co-ordination and management of all matters relating to Child Protection. The designated person for ARSDO Org is Admin or Child protection Coordinator. In handling cases of suspected child abuse the Child Protection Coordinator works closely with staff in the ARSDO.

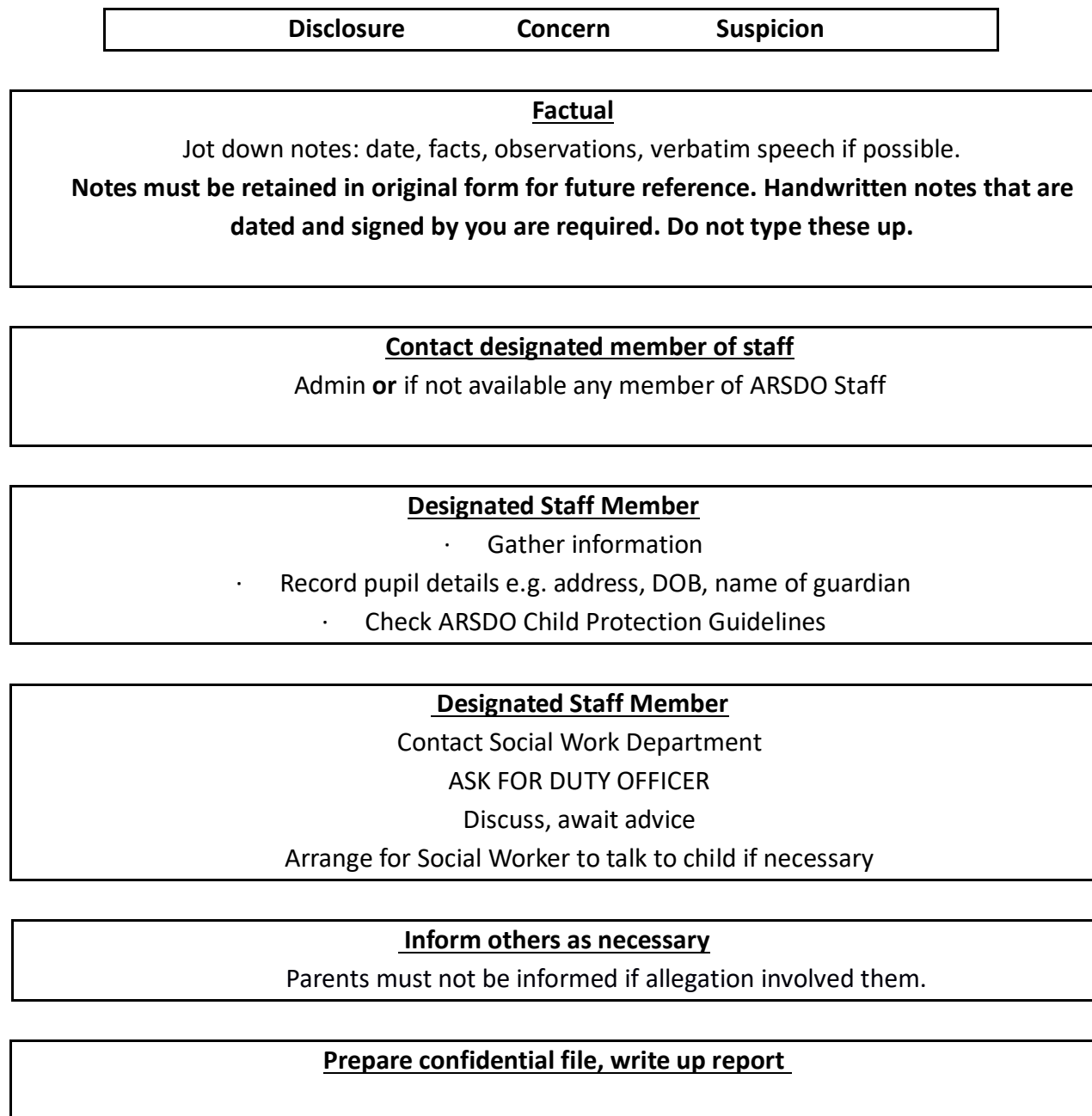
Any member of staff who is concerned that about a possible allegation of child abuse should speak to the Child Protection Coordinator or a senior member of staff. In the absence of the Child Protection Coordinator, staff should contact any senior member staff.

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a) Procedures for ARSDO staff to follow in cases of possible child abuse

Full details of the steps that all staff must follow in cases of suspected child abuse are given in the flow chart below. These are also explained in fuller detail.

ARSDO PROCEDURES: DEALING WITH POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE



Copy of any report to Area Education Office

1. A designated member of staff is responsible for co-ordinating action on child abuse within the establishment. Referrals should normally be through this designated person but every employee has the responsibility to make a direct referral if this is necessary.
2. Any member of staff suspecting or identifying child abuse, should, without delay, contact the designated member of staff. If contacting the designated person implies delay beyond the end of the ARSDO day or community session, an assessment should be made of the child's safety and, if necessary, a direct referral should be made.
3. Where the designated member of staff judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then he/she must ensure that Social Work is contacted (this to include discussion as to how parents are engaged). It is important that all staff understand that investigation only needs to establish evidence of the need to investigate abuse. A full inquiry by Education staff must be avoided because collection of evidence is a specialist Police/Social Work role. Inappropriate inquiries may prevent successful prosecution.
4. If it is considered that the child required immediate medical attention, contact the Health Centre, Health Visitor, ARSDO Doctor or Children's Hospital as appropriate. If there is a view that the child may risk further abuse if returned home, the Police and Social Work must be informed as soon as possible and preferably well before the end of the day.
5. When the designated member of staff considers that further investigation is required before suspicions can be confirmed or rejected, he/she can contact social work and any other agency who may be able to assist in any such inquiries or who may have information about the child or family.

The designated officer may also check the Child Protection Register.

6. In all cases, incidents should be logged, action taken and recorded in written form using Appendix 1 and Appendix 2

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A copy of any such report should be forwarded to the Head of Service designated for the ARSDO.

7. It is possible that employees are implicated in abuse. Indeed, any adult or child may be an abuser and research shows that some abuse may be perpetrated by women or men, or women and men acting in partnership. Disclosure should not be discounted because of the status or role of the alleged abuser.

8. A Chronology should be maintained for any concerns that occur on a day to day basis. These should be recorded using the Chronology Form, Appendix 4. Actions from the concerns should be followed up.

b) Confidentiality

It is essential that staff do not promise confidentiality to a child or young person. Staffs who become aware of a possible child protection case should discuss the matter only with the essential personnel referred to above. Any notes made by staff must be passed on to the designated person.

c) Parental/Carer Information

Parents/carers are informed that the ARSDO has a responsibility to take action if we think that any child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse. This information is given through a statement published annually in the ARSDO Prospectus. This statement informs parents that we are required to refer any cases of possible abuse or neglect directly to the Social Work Department, the Police or the Reporter. Parents are not normally informed if the ARSDO has to refer a child to one of these agencies.

d) The importance of the NESCP and Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection Guidelines

These guidelines set out clear procedures that ARSDOs **must follow** in cases where child abuse is suspected. Full copies of the NESCP guidelines and the Getting our Priorities Right pack are located in the following location:

· Other Staff's Office

Other staffs are not expected to be fully familiar with these guidelines but to be aware of this ARSDO policy and its associated procedures.

The ARSDO policy guidelines into steps and actions that the ARSDO has to follow. It is therefore essential that all staff follow the steps set out in the flow chart above.

6 Advice on dealing with disclosures

Children will decide for themselves if or when they will disclose information about situations which are worrying them. It is this person's role to reassure the child and gather the information which the child chooses to share with them.

The following guidance on dealing with disclosures are provided to assist staff who may have to respond, either as part of their work role or because they have been trusted by the child.

Listen to what the child has to say

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Do not interrupt, if the child is swearing, for example.
- Take notes

Reassure

- Reassure the child.
- Do not make promises you may not be able to keep, like *"I'll stay with you"*
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer.
- Provide reassurance and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example you could say:
"You're not to blame"

Speaking to the child

- Do not 'interrogate' the child for full details. You are not investigating the allegation.
- Do not ask leading questions, for example:
"Did he touch your private parts?"
- Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do ask open questions like: *"Anything else to tell me?"*
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible

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- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required later.
- Record date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used rather than translating them
- Do not take photographs or video any injuries or bruises. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising
- Record statements and what you observe, rather than your interpretation or assumptions.

ARSDO Procedures

- Follow the ARSDO guidelines.
- Quickly contact the ARSDO Child Protection Coordinator or a senior member of staff if they are unavailable.
- Ensure you have briefed the Child Protection Coordinator or a senior member of staff.

Relax

Get some support for yourself if you need it.

Where a member of staff or a person working in the ARSDO sees, hears or is advised of a child protection allegation, this person should quickly make the Child Protection Coordinator aware of the allegation or the details of the incident.

7 Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Checks

The PVG scheme is a Scottish Government scheme. It helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children through paid or unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. The ARSDO follows Aberdeenshire Council's policy on the application of the scheme. Staff and volunteers who work with children will need to be members of the PVG scheme.

8 Child Protection Training

Aberdeenshire Council makes child protection training available for people working in the ARSDO.

The awareness of all staff working in the ARSDO on child protection issues will be refreshed on an annual basis at the start of each new ARSDO session by a senior member of staff.

Staff working with children should attend a training session on Basic Child protection on a two yearly basis.

More specialists' trainings are available to staff to help them fulfil particular roles. Staff fulfilling those roles should identify the child protection training they require and arrange with the Child Protection Coordinator to receive that training.

Training may be provided by a number of routes for example by attending a course, by receiving briefing or by making use of e learning.

JOINT INVESTIGATION – POLICE, SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

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INITIAL REFERRAL DISCUSSION

- Where possible arrange a meeting between the individuals who will interview any child/ren.
- Decide at what stage parents/carers should be informed.
- Plan joint investigation in line with joint investigation guidance.

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JOINT INTERVIEWS

- Presence of person to support child.
- Consideration should be given to whether or not interviewing the child is the most appropriate first step, or whether an alternative course of action for example, interviewing other adults/children is more appropriate.
- The child may wish to have an adult present at the interview for support. This should not be the alleged perpetrator.

Parental consent

It is the responsibility of the Police and Social Worker carrying out the investigation to:-

- a) Arrange for the appropriate parent/carer to be informed of a referral alleging abuse.
- b) Where possible obtain their agreement for any interviews.

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The ARSDO Child Protection Policy will be revised annually using the following checklist:

<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Checklist:</u>
	1. Is there a named person responsible for Child Protection?
	2. Is there a copy of the ARSDO/ Authority Child Protection Guidelines available for Teachers and new staff, including NESCPG guidance? (NESCPG information leaflet)
	3. Is there an annual review of Child Protection requirements?
	4. Are there appropriate curriculum Experiences where children may learn about the value of family life?
	5. Do children know whom they can talk to about bullying and Child Protection matters?
	6. Are there arrangements to inform staff how to keep a chronology record? Appendix 4

Appendix 1

Establishment..... ... Designated Staff Name of Child DOB Gender		
Action taken	Incident	Date

Appendix 2

ARSDO

Name of Pupil

DoB

Class

Stage

Teacher

Concerns

Reported by _____

Date

Report received by (SMT) _____

Action (what, when, by whom)

Received by
Filed in: PPR

Date
Support File

Family File

APPENDIX 3

Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards
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|-------------------|--|
| Standard 1 | Children get the help they need when they need it. |
| Standard 2 | Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children. |
| Standard 3 | Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected. |
| Standard 4 | Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them. |
| Standard 5 | Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans. |
| Standard 6 | Professionals are competent and confident. |
| Standard 7 | Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children. |
| Standard 8 | Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness. |

Appendix 4

Education and Children's Services Chronology

Name of Child / Young Person	Date of Birth	Establishment / Service	Page number Eg Page 1 of

Date	Event	Action/outcome