



Child Protection Policy

Cargilfield is committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which all children feel valued, respected, and listened to. All staff share in this responsibility and are expected to uphold the principles and procedures for child protection set out in this policy.

Child protection sits within the wider framework of safeguarding, which encompasses all the policies and practices the school uses to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing. This includes everything from building security to the safe recruitment of staff.

This policy is informed by The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023), The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Edinburgh and Lothians Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Staff Child Protection Code of Conduct
- Low Level Concern Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Non-Recent Allegations of Abuse Policy
- FGM Policy
- CSE Policy
- PREVENT Policy
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Restraint Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Maximising Attendance and Minimising Absence Policy

This policy is reviewed each August, after which all staff are required to sign electronically to confirm that they have read, understood, and will follow it.

Upon appointment, staff are issued with the Child Protection Code of Conduct, which they must sign electronically to confirm that they have read, understood, and will adhere to the Code. Any amendments to the Code will be circulated to staff, and an additional signature will be required to confirm their continued compliance.

All staff receive child protection training on appointment and annually thereafter from an external provider and expert in child protection. The Child Protection Team undertake all statutory training as required. Governors receive child protection training on appointment and on an annual basis thereafter.

The policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Child protection is the responsibility of every member of staff at Cargilfield.
- The needs, safety, and wellbeing of pupils are always paramount.
- The school is committed to fostering strong, trusting relationships between staff, pupils, and parents.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, culture, religion, disability, gender, language, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or belief, have the right to protection.
- All staff must understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities whenever a child protection concern arises.
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse are treated with the utmost seriousness. Children who disclose abuse must be met with empathy and their accounts listened to, respected, and accepted without scepticism.
- Staff must report any concerns or disclosures on the same day to the Child Protection Team, which will then assume responsibility for further action.
- It is not the role of the School to investigate allegations or suspicions of abuse. The School's responsibility is to gather any relevant information it holds and refer the matter to the appropriate agencies, in line with this policy. It is then for those agencies to assess whether the concern meets the relevant threshold and to determine, in accordance with their own guidance and procedures, how to respond.
- When a case of abuse arises, the School acknowledges and accepts its responsibility to provide appropriate support to pupils, families, staff, and others involved.
- Effective inter-agency communication, information sharing, and partnership working are essential to achieving the best outcomes for children. Cargilfield will work collaboratively with Social Care Direct, the Police, health services, and other relevant agencies to promote the wellbeing and protection of children and young people. This includes contributing to early intervention when additional needs are identified and participating in inter-agency plans to support children subject to child protection measures. Where a child is believed to be at risk of harm, the child's safety must always be the primary concern. Staff must contact the Child Protection Officer (CPO) or one of the Deputy Child Protection Officers (DCPOs) immediately.
- The School recognises that Looked After Children, care-experienced children and young people, and those subject to kinship or residential care arrangements may have additional safeguarding and wellbeing needs. In line with GIRFEC principles, the School will work collaboratively with families, local authorities and partner agencies to promote wellbeing across the SHANARRI indicators and ensure appropriate support planning and information sharing.

If in doubt, pass it on

All staff play a vital role in identifying signs of abuse and responding to known or suspected cases of abuse or neglect. Within the daily life of the School, there are many opportunities to observe indicators that might otherwise go unnoticed. All staff must be familiar with the signs of abuse and neglect, as well as the actions required when such concerns arise.

In a boarding school environment, we carry an additional responsibility to ensure that the children in our care are always safe, secure, and well supported.

Roles and Responsibilities for Child Protection

Governing Body

The Chair of Governors and the Governing Board hold overall responsibility for overseeing all aspects of safeguarding, including child protection, within the school. They are accountable for ensuring that effective child protection policies and procedures are in place and implemented. Ms Elizabeth Langley is the designated governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding/child protection. She provides advice to the Board on safeguarding and child protection matters and meets termly with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee, which reports directly to her.

Child Protection Team

Child Protection Officer

Emma Buchanan	07729636925	ebuchanan@cargilfield.com
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Deputy Child Protection Officers

Will Stephen	07817409463	wstephen@cargilfield.com
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Alan Pike	07411461167	apike@cargilfield.com
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Head Teacher

Colin MacIntosh	0131 336 2207	cmacIntosh@cargilfield.com
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At Cargilfield the Child Protection Officers will:

- Serve as the first point of contact for any child protection concerns and act as required.
- Keep up to date with Scottish legislation, policy and practice relating to the protection of children.
- Undertake all required statutory training.
- Review and maintain up-to-date child protection policies.
- Ensure appropriate records are kept and stored securely. Child protection and wellbeing records are stored electronically on iSAMS Wellbeing Manager; paper copies of historic child protection records are kept in a locked cabinet and held by the Child Protection Officer.
- Brief all staff on child protection procedures during induction and at termly whole staff meetings.
- Ensure that all staff training is organised, completed and recorded.
- Provide regular child protection updates to the Head Teacher and the safeguarding/ child protection governor.

Forms of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect refer to forms of maltreatment where a child's needs are not met, or where an act causes harm or fails to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home, within their family or peer network, in care placements, institutions or community settings, and in online or digital environments. Those responsible may be known or unknown to the child, including family members or people in positions of trust.

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 result when a parent or carer feigns symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health (fabricated or induced illness).

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act involving a child in activities for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact or non-contact actions such as encouraging a child to view or produce indecent images or to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. A child under 16 cannot consent to sexual activity. Certain offences and protections apply up to age 18, particularly where abuse of trust or indecent images is involved.

Child sexual exploitation

CSE is a form of sexual abuse in which an individual or group uses an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the child needs or wants, or for the advantage of the perpetrator. Apparent consent does not diminish the abusive nature of the behaviour. CSE may occur with or without physical contact and can be entirely technology facilitated.

Child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviours

Child-on-child abuse is when children or young people harm each other, including through physical, emotional, or online behaviour. This includes harmful sexual behaviours, which are sexual actions that are not appropriate for a child's age or development and may be harmful or abusive. These behaviours exist on a range from normal to concerning and may reflect unmet needs or past experiences. All such behaviour must be taken seriously and understood in a child-centred, trauma-informed way that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse takes place when a child's confidence and self-esteem is repeatedly damaged. Emotional abuse is emotional ill treatment that may be persistent. 'Persistent' refers to a continuous or intermittent pattern that has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm. Emotional abuse may include conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, exploitation or corruption, demands inappropriate for age or development, repeated silencing, ridiculing, or intimidation, extreme overprotection limiting learning and social development, seeing or hearing the abuse of another.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant impairment of health or development. It may be continuous or intermittent; however, single incidents can also cause significant harm. Neglect includes failing to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter, protection from physical or emotional harm, adequate supervision (including inappropriate caregivers), appropriate medical care or treatment, access to education, consistent emotional support. Neglect is often stereotyped as linked to poverty, but affluent neglect highlights that emotional care, not money, is essential for healthy development. Wealth can sometimes hide or normalize neglect because the child appears "fortunate" on the surface.

This aligns with Scottish Government definitions, reinforced by GIRFEC wellbeing indicators.

Criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation involves using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive a child under 18 into criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the benefit of the perpetrator. Violence, threats, physical contact, drug related activity, or technology may be involved. Apparent consent does not negate exploitation.

Child trafficking

Child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Movement can occur within local areas and does not require crossing borders. Forms of exploitation can include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, forced labour, organ removal, illegal adoption, and forced or illegal marriage. This aligns with the national guidance on trafficking and exploitation.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is an extreme form of physical, sexual, and emotional harm involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia, or injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in Scotland and associated with long term physical and psychological harm. The national guidance includes FGM as a specific form of abuse requiring immediate protection.

Forced marriage and honour-based abuse (HBA)

Forced marriage occurs when one or both parties do not give free and full consent, and pressure or abuse is used. Duress may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual, or emotional. Forced marriage may occur alongside honour-based abuse, which includes behaviours used to control family or community members to protect perceived cultural or religious honour. These categories are explicitly referenced in the national guidance.

Online abuse and the sharing of indecent images

Online abuse is harm caused to a child through digital technologies, including bullying, harassment, coercion, grooming, or exploitation via social media, messaging, or gaming platforms. The sharing of indecent images involves creating, possessing, or distributing sexual images of children and young people, which is illegal and harmful, even if shared between peers. In line with national guidance, these behaviours are serious child protection concerns that may indicate vulnerability, coercion or exploitation and can have significant emotional and psychological impacts. All incidents must be addressed promptly using a child-centred, trauma-informed approach that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all children involved.

Signs of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse and neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused at home; within a family or peer network; in institutions; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. The abuse may have been a single event or an accumulation of concerns.

These are general indicators that a child may be troubled, though not necessarily because of abuse. A child may show some of these problems or none. It is the combination, frequency, and duration of these signs, particularly when they represent a change from the child's usual behaviour, that should alert you to a potential concern. There can be an overlap between all the different forms of child abuse, and all or several can co-exist.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Signs of possible physical abuse (particularly if they are recurrent):

- Bruising is the most common presenting feature of physical abuse in children
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them
- Excessive physical punishment
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

When considering the possibility of non-accidental injury, it is important to remember that the injuries may have occurred for other reasons, e.g. genuine accidents or medical disorders.

PHYSICAL NEGLECT

Signs of possible physical neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Stealing

NON-ORGANIC FAILURE TO THRIVE

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive:

- Significant lack of growth
- Weight loss
- Hair loss
- Poor skin or muscle tone
- Circulatory disorders

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Low self-esteem
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorder
- Significant decline in concentration
- Socio-emotional immaturity
- 'Neurotic' behaviour (e.g. rocking, head banging)
- Self-mutilation
- Compulsive stealing
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Indiscriminate friendliness

SEXUAL ABUSE

Not all children are able to tell parents or carers that they have been assaulted. Changes in behaviour may be a signal that something has happened. It is important to remember that in sexual assault there may well be no physical or behavioural signs. Signs of possible sexual abuse:

Behavioural

- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults
- Fear of a particular individual
- Social isolation - withdrawal or introversion
- Sleep disturbance (nightmares, irrational fears, bed wetting, fear of sleeping alone, needing a nightlight)
- Running away from home
- Girls taking over the mothering role
- Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for activities
- Low self-esteem
- Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse
- Display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years
- Unusual interest in the genitals of adults or children or animals
- Expressing affection in an age-inappropriate way, e.g. 'French kissing'
- Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors
- Abnormal, sexualised drawing
- Fear of medical examinations
- Developmental regression
- Poor peer relations
- Inappropriate or sexually harmful behaviours
- Compulsive masturbation
- Stealing
- Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal pain or headache
- Having unexplained/abundance of sums of money and/or possessions
- Sexual promiscuity

Physical/Medical

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks to the thighs or genital areas
- Itch, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding from the rectum, vagina or penis
- Pain on passing urine or recurrent urinary infection
- Stained underwear
- Unusual genital odour
- Anxiety/depression
- Eating disorder, e.g. anorexia nervosa or bulimia
- Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pregnancy - particularly when reluctant to name father
- Venereal disease, sexually transmitted diseases
- Soiling or wetting in children who have been trained

- Self-mutilation/suicide attempt

Children from minority ethnic groups, international pupils (EAL) and those with additional support needs may be more vulnerable, due to barriers they may face, especially around communication.

Staff Action

If you suspect a risk of harm, you must follow these guidelines:

If a child makes a disclosure to you:

- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain why and outline with whom the information will need to be shared.
- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Ask questions only to establish the basic facts, without interrogating or using leading questions. Use **Who? What? Where? When?**
- Ensure the child is supported to express how they feel.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame.
- Take all allegations seriously. Do not show disbelief or appear judgemental.
- Do not share personal information or experiences, whether your own or those of other children.
- Do not make comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- **Report to Emma Buchanan in person, or in her absence another member of the Child Protection Team, as soon as possible, and in all cases on the same day that the concern arises. You will be guided in recording the information on the iSAMS Wellbeing Manager.**

If you have a concern arising from something you have observed or from comments made by a third party, you must **Observe, Record, and Report**.

Respond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock.

Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset.

Confidentiality must not be promised.

Observe carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the person expressing concern.

Record in detail what you have seen or heard.

Report in person to Emma Buchanan, or in her absence another member of the Child Protection Team, as soon as possible, and in all cases on the same day that the concern arises.

DO NOT interrogate or conduct detailed investigations. Encourage the child to speak freely and share what they wish, until sufficient information has been gained for the Child Protection Team to decide whether a referral is appropriate

The team will then meet to consider:

- Is the child at immediate risk of harm?
- What is placing this child at immediate risk?
- What needs to happen to remove the risk now?
- Is the harm significant and therefore do child protection procedures (contacting Social Care Direct or the Police) need to be instigated?

Once the information has been reported to Social Care Direct or the Police, they will assume responsibility for investigating the allegations and determining whether further action is required. Any subsequent involvement by the Child Protection Team will be carried out under their direction.

Third-Party and Anonymous Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding information received from third parties must be treated seriously and responded to promptly.

Staff Responsibilities

Where a third party expresses a concern, staff must:

- Listen carefully, remain calm, and respond appropriately.
- Report the concern to the Child Protection Team as soon as possible, and in all cases on the same day that the concern arises.
- Make a clear, factual written record, including dates, times, and the exact words used where possible. Observations of demeanour should be recorded where the concern is raised in person.

Staff must **not promise confidentiality**. Information may require to be shared to protect the child. While anonymity may be respected where possible, this cannot be guaranteed, particularly if statutory child protection processes or legal proceedings follow.

Information Sharing

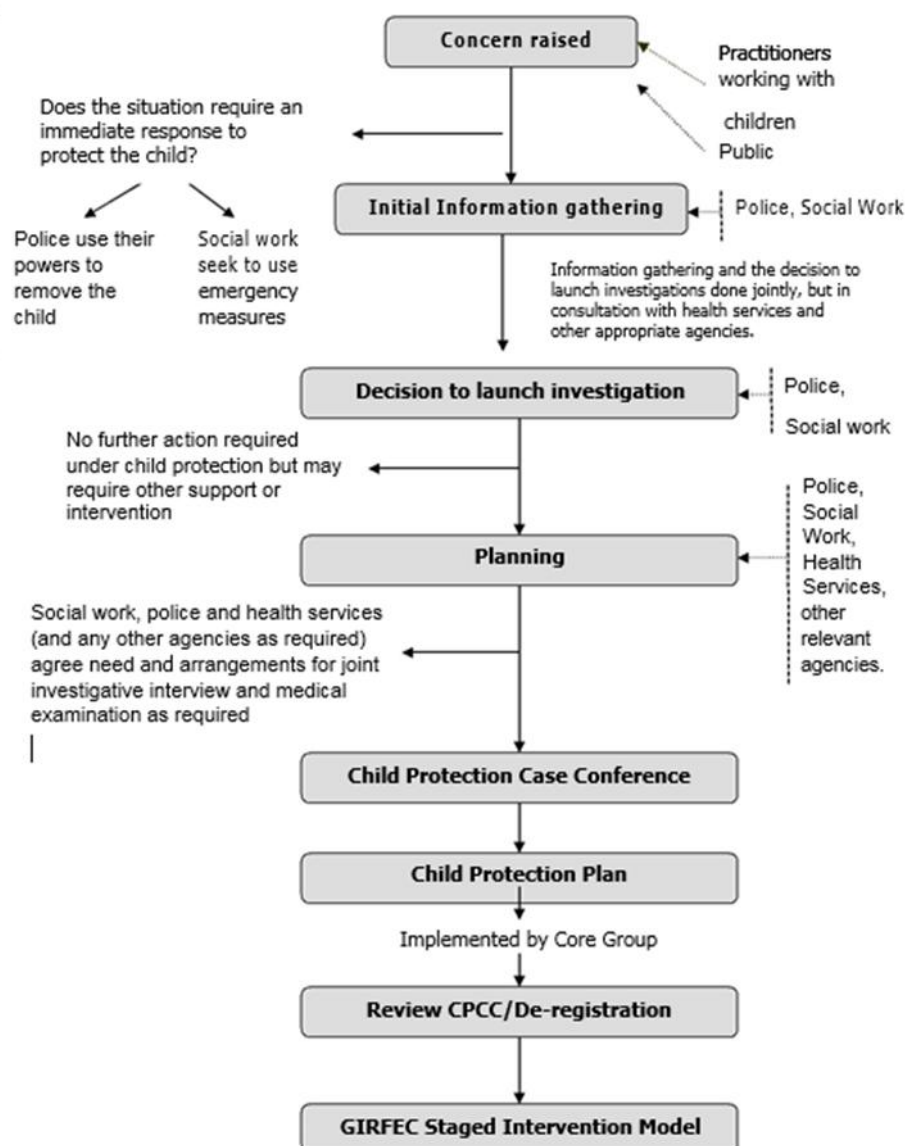
The Child Protection Team is responsible for sharing relevant information with appropriate agencies (including Social Care Direct, Police and health services) to support early assessment and determine whether child protection action is required, in accordance with statutory information sharing duties.

Anonymous Allegations

Any anonymous allegation relating to potential child abuse or neglect must be passed immediately to the Child Protection Team for assessment and appropriate action.

Exceptional Circumstances

Under Scottish law, any person may make a direct referral to the Children's Reporter. Where a member of staff believes that safeguarding/child protection concerns are not being taken seriously or acted upon with sufficient urgency, they may escalate concerns to the Chair of Governors and/or make a direct referral, acting in good faith and in the best interests of the child



Managing Allegations or Concerning Information About Staff

Allegations Suggesting Possible Child Abuse

All information, allegations, or complaints about staff or adults living on site that suggest possible child abuse are taken seriously and acted upon immediately. Where there is a clear indication of abuse or a criminal offence against a child, the Police will be contacted to investigate, alongside the School's Disciplinary Policy.

Any member of staff who becomes aware of such information must inform the Head Teacher, or in his absence Emma Buchanan, without delay and in all cases on the same day that the concern arises. The Head Teacher will immediately notify the Chair of Governors. No one will be questioned until Police advice is received, and guidance will be taken on what information can be shared with the staff member concerned to protect evidence.

Concerning Information that does not suggest child abuse

Where information is unclear, basic facts will be established using open, non-leading questions. If there is uncertainty, advice will be sought from the Police. Should the information indicate possible abuse at any point, safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately.

If the concern relates to inappropriate behaviour that does not constitute child abuse, the context and intent will be assessed, and the School's Low Level Concern policy or disciplinary procedures may be applied. The member of staff will always be informed of the concern.

Precautionary Suspension

The Child Protection Team will consider how best to protect children during any investigation. A precautionary suspension, without prejudice, may be imposed by the Headmaster and Chair of Governors where:

- A pupil may be at risk of harm
- Police investigation is required
- The allegation could lead to dismissal

Suspension will be implemented immediately, including during school holidays, and the staff member will be instructed not to contact pupils. Consideration will be given to the possibility of other affected pupils. Decisions about informing parents will be taken carefully, following Police and legal advice, to balance openness with confidentiality where matters are under investigation.

If allegations are substantiated, parents will be informed of the outcome and action taken. Even where Police investigations do not lead to prosecution, disciplinary action may still be pursued if concerns remain. Referrals to the PVG Scheme, GTCS or SSSC may be made where appropriate.

Allegations Against the Head

If the allegation concerns the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors will be informed immediately. Governors will assume responsibility for managing the process, taking independent advice to ensure transparency and avoid any perception of a cover-up.

Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

Where an allegation is found to be unfounded, the decision and reasons will be formally recorded. Staff may seek support from professional associations. If an allegation is determined to be malicious, consideration will be given to safeguarding other staff members.

Abuse of Trust

Under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, it is a criminal offence for an adult in a position of trust such as any school staff member to engage in sexual activity with a child under the age of 18.

All child protection concerns are brought to the attention of the Head Teacher immediately by The Child Protection Team. All safeguarding/child protection cases are reviewed at the termly Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee's meeting.

Emma Buchanan: August 2026 (Next review date August 2027)

