

YSGOL GYFUN BRYNTIRION COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy



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Policy on Child Protection

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Child Protection Policy

All children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and the Children Act 1991 promotes children's welfare as being of paramount importance.

Aims

1. To raise awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need for child protection and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
2. To raise awareness of child protection procedures established by All Wales Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs).
3. To monitor children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
4. To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
5. To develop a structured internal procedure to be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
6. To promote understanding and build relationships with other agencies in order to work together more effectively.
7. To support the child's development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence.
8. To integrate a child protection curriculum within the existing curriculum, allowing for continuity through all key stages.
9. To develop a network of support for young people and adult members of the school community.

Statutory Obligations

Bryntirion Comprehensive School has a statutory duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse. Every school, under the Children Act, must assist Social Services Departments in investigating suspected child abuse. It is not, however, the responsibility of staff in schools to investigate suspected child abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

1. Physical abuse – non-accidental cuts, bruises, wounds, burns, fractures bites, poisoning etc.
2. Neglect – chronic inattention to a child’s basic needs for warmth, shelter, food, clothing etc.
3. Emotional abuse – extreme denial of love, attention, security and well being.
4. Sexual abuse – actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.

Rationale

Bryntirion Comprehensive School will seek to:

- Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults whom they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties;
- Work with parents to build an understanding of the school’s responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require cases to be referred to other investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure.
- Be vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers reports such cases to the school’s designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to relevant professionals such as social workers;
- Monitor children who have been identified as ‘at risk’ keeping, in a secure location, clear record of pupils’ progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality; providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to and attending cases conferences.
- Provide child protection training regularly to school staff and, in particular, to designated teachers to ensure that their skills and expertise are up to date;
- Ensure the school staff are provided with Child Protection information as required by WAG and/or LEA.

- Contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;

All staff have a critical role in ensuring the successful and effective implementation of the school's Child Protection Policy. Where a member of staff sees signs that cause concern or is made aware of possible case of child abuse they should **immediately inform the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer**. On no account should concerns be ignored or a disclosure be deferred on the grounds that it is likely to be fanciful or imaginary. Evidence suggests that the vast majority of cases of abuse referred by children in confidence are based on fact and reality. **It is better to be over cautious than for a child to suffer.**

Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer

Bryntirion's Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer is the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs. C.Jenkins). In the absence of the Assistant Headteacher, any referral regarding child abuse should be made by the Headteacher.

The school's Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer will endeavour wherever possible.

- (a) To be fully conversant with the Local Authority and School Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- (b) To be available to all staff of the school for consultation of child protection concerns.
- (c) To ensure that appropriate action is taken in the school and procedures are followed in all cases of actual or suspected child abuse.
- (d) To compile a record of pupils in the school on the Child Protection Register (CPR), to keep this updated as notification is received and to liaise with the school Education Welfare Officer and other professions in ensuring that children on the CPR are monitored.
- (e) Where appropriate, to take part in Child Protection conferences or reviews or to ensure that another key member of staff attends. Where this is not possible, to provide a report to the conference from the school. However, the presence of school staff is vital because of their close involvement with the child.
- (f) To inform the Social Service Department Child Protection Co-ordinator, in writing, when a child on the CPR moves to another school and to inform the new school of the child's status on the Register.

General Procedures

Staff are trained to act professionally, neither jumping to a conclusion unreasonably, nor failing to act on genuine concerns. In the event of a concern, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Monitoring Concerns

Any member of staff, teaching or non-teaching will complete a written record of an incident or information given them by a pupil on an information sheet. This must be discussed immediately with the Child Protection Liaison Officer. Written records will be retained confidentially and securely.

2. Referrals

The making of a referral should not be seen as an allegation that abuse has necessarily occurred. The school has a responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and occasionally cases may need to be referred to other investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure.

When a member of staff, teaching or non-teaching, is alerted to sign of abuse, he/she **must** refer the case to the Child Protection Liaison Officer. If referral is considered appropriate, the Child Protection Liaison Officer will refer the case to the Duty Team of the Child Protection Unit within the Social Services Department.

It may be necessary to follow up the referral by contact with another agency e.g. the LEA's Pupil Services Manager, the EWO., the G.P., etc.

Written records will be completed by all concerned and retained confidentially and securely.

If a member of staff is accused of abuse, the Headteacher will act according to the LEA inter-agency procedure. The school's priority will be the protection of the child, but will also recognise the legitimate interests of a teacher who may be falsely accused.

Procedures are in place to ensure that unsuitable people are not given the opportunity to abuse children in school. Staff are subject to formal vetting procedures.

Case Conferences

Attendance at an inter-agency case conference is a priority and the school recognises this commitment, even in school holidays.

Curriculum

Child abuse is increasingly being covered within the curriculum in PSE lessons. Likewise, the school has a preventative role to play by looking towards a time when pupils will themselves be parents, hence the importance of PSE.

If children are being injured or emotionally abused within the school by fellow pupils, they too will be protected (see Anti-Bullying Policy).

Child Protection Procedures for All Staff (See Appendix 1)

When a member of staff, teaching or non teaching, is alerted to signs of abuse, she/he should:

- Refer the case to the Child Protection Liaison Officer, Mrs C. Jenkins. In the absence of the Assistant Headteacher, any referral regarding child abuse should be made to the Headteacher.

The Child Protection Liaison Officer should:

- Refer the case to the Child Protection Unit within Social Services.
- Note the name and position of the social worker contacted at the time of reporting the concern and record for possible further reference. A brief written confirmation of the verbal report is made after the end of the telephone referral and sent to the social services department. (FAX)
- Where there is a known Social Services officer working with the child or family, an attempt will be made to make direct contact with that specific social worker.
- Submit the appropriate Inter-Agency pre-referral and referral forms to the Social Services department.
- Inform the LEA Child Protection Co-ordinator, in writing, that a referral has been made.
- Keep the Headteacher informed.
- Ask to be kept informed of the strategy discussions between statutory agencies, which will decide whether, and how to investigate.
- Record the date, event, action taken and the result of suspected child abuse and keep records confidential and secure. (See Child Protection Report Form Appendix 2)
- Contribute to the co-ordinated approach to Child Protection by developing effective liaison with other agencies and support.

When a member of staff hears an allegation from a child, she/he must:

- seek information from the child with tact and sympathy.
- not ask leading questions.
- listen to the child without interruptions as she/he freely recalls significant events.
- make a note of the discussion to pass on to the Child Protection Liaison Officer.
- record the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion on an information sheet (see Appendix 2).
- not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality as staff have a responsibility to disclose information, although only to those who need to know about it.
- report the information to the Child Protection Liaison Officer.
- If unsure about whether a case should be formally referred, or has a general concern about a child's health development, advice can be sought from Social Services, or Mrs P. Tobin. (LEA Child Protection Officer)

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Lists of signs and symptoms are not fail-safe mechanisms, but they are often helpful indicators in certain combinations of the likelihood or reality of abuse. Children may behave strangely or appear unhappy for many reasons as they move through the inevitable stages of growing up and their families experience changes.

These are lists of some of the signs and types of behaviour, which may indicate that a child is being abused. In themselves they are not evidence of abuse, but they may suggest abuse if a child exhibits several of them or if a pattern emerges. There can be, of course, other explanations for a child showing such signs or behaving in such ways. There is good deal of overlap between the signs and symptoms of the different types of abuse, particularly between emotional and other types of abuse.

- (i) **“Physical abuse:** where a parent (or somebody else caring for the child) physically hurts, injures or kills a child. This can involve hitting, skating, squeezing, burning and biting. It also involves giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol, and attempted suffocation or drowning. It includes the use of excessive force when carrying out tasks like feeding or nappy changing.

Possible signs of physical abuse:

- unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent and non accidental.
- refusal to discuss injuries.
- improbable explanations for injuries, especially facial bruising around the mouth, ears and eyes.
- untreated injuries or lingering illness not attended to.
- admission of punishment which appears excessive.
- shrinking from physical contact.
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted.
- fear of undressing.
- fear of medical help.
- aggression / bullying.
- over-complaint behaviour without explanation.

- deterioration of work.
- unexplained pattern of absences which may severe to hide bruises or other physical injuries.
- evidence of self –harm or mutilation

(ii) ***Emotional abuse:*** where children are harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threat, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.”

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- continual self-deprecation
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- self-harm or mutilation
- compulsive stealing / scrounging
- drug / solvent abuse
- ‘neurotic’ behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking and so on.
- air of detachment – ‘don’t care’ attitude
- social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- desperate attention-seeking behaviour
- eating problems, including over-eating and lack of appetite
- depression, withdrawal
- subjected to constant criticism and scapegoating

(iii) ***Neglect:*** where parents (or whoever else is caring for the child) fail to meet the basic essential needs for children, like adequate food, clothes, warmth and medical care. Leaving young children alone and unsupervised is another example of neglect. Refusing or failing to give adequate love and affection is a case of emotional neglect.

Possible signs of Neglect:

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- inappropriate clothing
- frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- untreated medical problems
- low self-esteem
- poor social relationships
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- constant tiredness

(iv) ***Sexual abuse:*** when adults seek sexual gratification by using children (boys or girls). This may be by having sexual intercourse (buggery), engaging with the child in fondling, masturbation or oral sex, and includes encouraging children to watch sexually explicit behaviour or pornographic material, including videos.

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body
- scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions
- pregnancy – particularly in the case of young adolescents who are evasive concerning the identity of the father
- sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age – shown, for example, in drawings, vocabulary, games and so on
- frequent public masturbation
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- refusing to stay with certain people or go certain places
- aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- withdrawals from friends
- self-harm or mutilation
- (boys) rectal incompetence

Advice About Dealing With Disclosures

Receive

- Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet with revulsion or disbelief.
- Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking, 'Why didn't you tell me before?'

Reassure

- Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It is essential to be honest with the child, so don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be right now'.
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer a child who is at risk.
- Try to alleviate any feeling of guilt that the child displays. For example, you could say 'You're not to blame', or 'You're not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to'.
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened.
- Empathise with the child – don't tell them what they should be feeling.

React

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but to not 'interrogate' them for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions such as 'What did he do next?' (this assumes that he did!) or 'Did he touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court. Instead, ask open questions like 'Anything else to tell me?', 'Yes?' or 'And?'
- Do not criticise the perpetrator: the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.

- Do not ask the pupil to repeat everything to another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.
- Inform the designated teacher for child protection.

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper, which comes to hand. (It is not ideal to make to make notes in front of the child so explain why you are doing it). Write them up as soon as possible on our Information Sheet(s)
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the child uses their family's own private sexual words, record the actual words used rather than translating them into 'proper' words.
- Use the body outline to indicate the position of any bruising.
- Be objective and non-judgmental in your recording: include statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

Support

- Try to continue to support the child, providing time and a safe space throughout the process of investigation and afterwards.
- Get some support for yourself, without disclosing confidential information about the child to colleagues.

Monitoring and Record Keeping

We can play a vital role in helping abused children and those who are suspected of being abused by the effective monitoring and recording of certain aspects of the child's progress and behaviour in school. This is particularly important when there has been no direct disclosure of abuse, or when a child has communication problems.

When is recording needed?

- When there is concern in school over:
 - marks on a child's body.
 - unusual/different behaviour (including academic functioning)
 - mood changes.
 - puzzling statements or stories from the child.
 - information from others.
- If requested by another agency, for example, following a case conference.

Who should record?

- Any member of the school's staff

What should be recorded?

- Patterns of attendance.
- Changes in mood.
- Changes in classroom functioning.

- Relationships (with peers, adults).
- Behaviour.
- Statements, comments, stories, ‘news’, drawings.
- General demeanour and appearance.
- Parental interest and comments.
- Home/family changes.
- Medicals.
- Response to PE/sport.
- Injuries / marks, past and present.

How should it be recorded?

- On the Information Sheet(s) and then passed to the Child Protection Liaison Officer who will then place it in the Confidential File or decide on further action after consultation with the Headteacher.

It must be remembered that the first indication that a child is being abused is not necessarily the presence of a severe injury. Concerns that a child is being abused may be aroused by the sign of bruises or marks on a child’s body, or by remarks made by a child, his/her parents or friends, or the observations of a child’s behaviour or reactions, or from an awareness that a family is under stress and may help with caring for the children, or from a number of other factors.

Whilst the situation may not seem initially to be serious, it is worth remembering that prompt help to a family in trouble may prevent minor abuse escalating into something more serious.

It is therefore imperative that the Child Protection Liaison Officer is immediately informed of any concern so that they matter may be referred to the appropriate agencies as quickly as possible.

Parents and Child Protection Issues

Bryntirion is well-used to working in partnership with parents. As an aid to this process, the school will endeavour to explain to parents, as and when requested and required, its policy on child protection and related aspects of confidentiality. It must be recognised that instances of child abuse can result in difficulties in maintaining a constructive relationship with parents.

When it is necessary to see angry or distressed parents it is helpful to:

- Acknowledge their feelings
- Be clear about the schools’ responsibility for the welfare of all students.
- If appropriate, offer information about other agencies that may be able to support parents.
- Be aware of confidentiality and take care not to share confidential information (e.g. to an allegedly abusing parent).

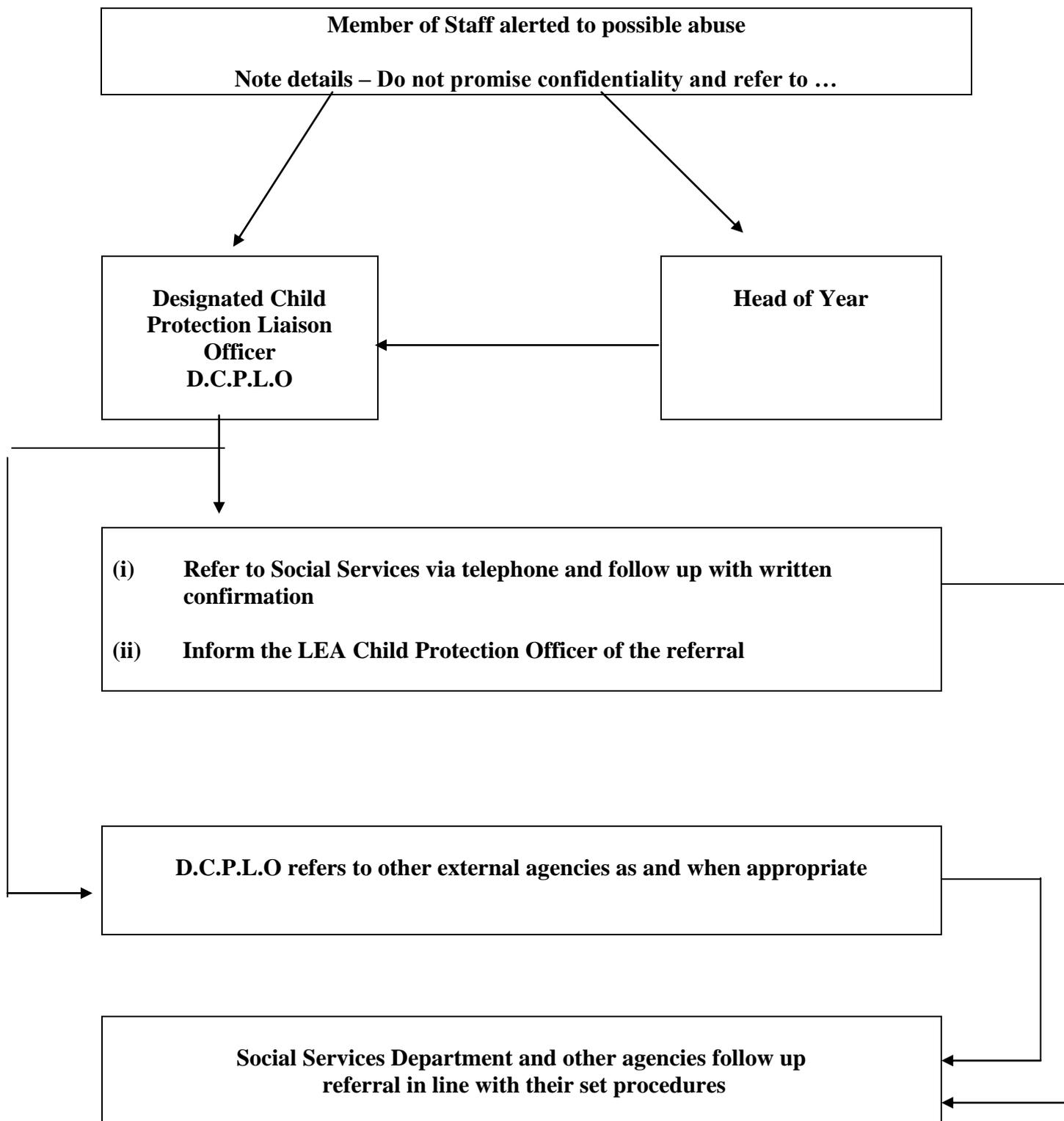
- Seek the support of the social worker in helping rebuild the relationship.
- When discussing other matters relating to progress or behaviour, be clear about the purpose of the discussion and discuss issues objectively.

Parents will normally be at child protection case conferences and teachers may need to consider how to share information that may seem critical of parents.

Confidentiality

Parents can be reassured that Child Protection issues will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Information will only be given to relevant people such as the Headteacher and the Child Protection Liaison Officer. Other members of staff need know only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed pupil. The pupil, depending on his/her age, should be kept informed of who knows and what they know at all stages of the procedures.

A STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH A CHILD PROTECTION DISCLOSURE



CHILD PROTECTION FORM
PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

NOTIFICATION OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NON-ACCIDENTIAL INJURY

Section 1 – Child’s Details:

Date of Report: ___/___/___

First Name(s) _____ Family Name _____

Gender (please tick as appropriate)

Male

Female

Form: _____

Section 2 – Reasons for Notification:

How was the suspected abuse first noticed? _____

When was the suspected abuse first noticed? _____

Is there anything unusual in the child’s appearance? _____

Is there anything unusual in the child’s attitude? _____

Section 3 – Action Taken To Date:

Section 4 – Outcomes of Actions and Contacts With Other Agencies To Date:

