

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Our Approach

Every child and young person has a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that may result in harm and everyone has a responsibility to protect children and young people.

Emotional and physical safety provides children and young people with a foundation for wellbeing and healthy development. Our prime responsibility is the welfare and wellbeing of all children in our care, building on strengths and resilience as well as addressing any vulnerabilities within a child's world. If we do have any concerns, or are told of concerns, we have a duty to the children, parents/carers and staff to act quickly and in partnership with the child and those who care about and have responsibilities for the child.

Evidence shows that the most effective protection of children involves early support with the family before urgent action is needed. We are fully committed to the GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) principles and guidelines which inform the Scottish Government National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2021/09/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/documents/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/govscot%3Adocument/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021.pdf?forceDownload=true>

The Guidance defines **child protection** as the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of any required action, together with the actions themselves where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm. **Child protection procedures are initiated when police, social work or health and educational professionals determine that a child may have been harmed, or may be at risk of significant harm.** In most cases, any concerns we have are managed at the consideration and assessment stage which includes sharing information with everyone who may be able support the child and their family.

**Safeguarding** is a much wider concept and focuses on promoting the welfare of children, young people and protected adults. It encompasses protection from maltreatment, preventing damage to health or development, making sure they are growing up in a safe and caring environment; and taking action to enable all children, young people and protected adults to achieve the best possible outcomes. Safeguarding is described as the golden thread that runs through all aspects of learning. The aim is to support the development of the learner's knowledge, skills and resilience to keep themselves safe and protected, and to develop an understanding of the world so they can respond to a range of issues and potentially risky situations throughout their lives.

## 2. The Aim of Our Policy

This policy aims to make sure

- EMAS operates a robust and safe selection and appointment process which requires all staff who interact regularly with children to be members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme and to participate in relevant professional learning
- We create a safe environment for children and young people and the adults who work with them
- Our staff have the information, knowledge, support and guidance to keep children and young people safe and protected
- Our staff are registered with the relevant professional body (General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) or the Scottish Social Services
- We take account of local and national inter-agency child protection guidelines
- We respect confidentiality and only share information and concerns with people who need to know
- We take all concerns seriously and respond to them in line with our policy and national guidance; and
- We refer concerns, we do not investigate them.

## 3. Implementing the Policy

The school has a duty to report any suspicions of abuse and neglect to the Children and Families department of the local authority (Edinburgh Council), who have a duty to investigate such matters. The school will follow the child protection procedures laid out by the local authority and will seek their advice on all subsequent steps. Parents/carers can also contact Social Care Direct themselves on 0131 200 2324 (during working hours) and Emergency Social Work out with these hours on 0800 731 6969.

The designated person for dealing with any child protection issues is the Principal (Emma Rattigan) who is the Child Protection Coordinator. Her Deputy is the Teens Lead (Allison Doig). The Principal has responsibility for appropriate staff training and support, information dissemination to staff, and liaison with child protection agencies and the Care Inspectorate. She will ensure that all staff regularly update their training and awareness on child protection issues. We regularly review and update this child protection policy.

In implementing our Child Protection Policy we follow the code of conduct as set out in the City of Edinburgh Council Child Protection Guidelines:

- Treat all children and staff equally, with respect and dignity
- Help children to feel confident to let staff know if someone is doing something to them that they do not like: **We use observations in class to help gauge wellbeing and mood**
- Make sure staff understand the issues of boundaries and safety when working with children: **Our CPD Programme includes scenario based training**
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children to share in the decision-making process: **We develop child centred plans based on their interests and needs**
- Involve parents and carers wherever possible: **We have an active parent engagement programme in place and we offer parent coaching sessions**

- Inform the Principal of any personal difficulties that might affect staff's ability to do their job competently and safely.
- Share with the Principal and/or her Deputy of any concerns about a member of staff behaving in a way believed to be inappropriate.
- Keep up to date with the child protection policy and procedures in the school. **We do this through staff meetings, appraisal and CPD sessions using a scenario based approach and constructive feedback**
- Work in an open environment where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- Only restrain a child if s/he/they are at imminent risk of causing damage to her/himself, other children or staff. Use the minimum force needed to prevent the harm. Be sure to record the incident on the day. Get help from another member of staff when faced with this kind of situation. **We have specialist OT support to assist if such a situation arises and to work with staff on recognising and managing triggers.**

#### 4. Where there is a child protection or safeguarding concern

Any member of staff (teaching or support) who is concerned about a child or young person in our care must immediately:

- Inform the Child Protection Coordinator (the Principal) or her Deputy
- Complete the GIRFEC Wellbeing Concern Form (Appendix 1)

The Child Protection Coordinator will then share any concerns about possible harm to a child from abuse, neglect or exploitation with police or social work without delay.

If staff are unsure whether a concern would meet the threshold for child protection, they must discuss it with their Child Protection Coordinator (the Principal). Advice and support can also contact the following organisations at any time for advice and support:

Organisation	Role	Link/Contact
Local Authority social services	Advice and Guidance <b>Must be contacted about any child protection or safeguarding concerns (see 3)</b>	0131 200 2324 (during working hours) and Emergency Social Work out with these hours on 0800 731 6969
The Registrar of Independent Schools	Scottish Government official who assists in the registration and regulation of Independent Schools. <b>Has no formal role but will provide advice and support as needed</b>	<a href="mailto:independentschools@education.scot.nhs.uk">independentschools@education.scot.nhs.uk</a>
The School's link HM Inspector	No direct role but good practice to keep them informed. Can provide <b>advice and support</b>	
The Care Inspectorate	No direct role but Early years learning must be registered and there are <b>key notifiable</b>	

	<b>incidents that must be reported. Can provide advice and support</b>	
<b>The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)</b>	Regulatory body for all teachers. <b>Independent schools have a legal obligation to refer teachers in certain circumstances.</b> They do not have a direct role in individual child protection cases but <b>can discuss teacher referrals and offer advice</b>	
<b>The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)</b>	SCIS is not a regulatory body but is happy to offer <b>guidance, support and training</b> to membership schools (EMAS is a member)	
<b>National Education Safeguarding Leads Network</b>	A new network bringing together education safeguarding leads. In time they will provide <b>guidance and advice</b> on child protection	
<b>The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)</b>	Regulatory body for all non GTCS registered classroom staff. <b>Certain incidents relating to these staff must be reported and will provide advice and guidance</b>	

## 5. Information Sharing

Where there is a child protection concern, relevant information has to be shared with the police and/or social work and regulatory bodies without delay, **provided it is necessary, and lawful** to do so. Information on information sharing and records management can be found in Part 1 of the *Scottish Government National Guidance in Scotland 2021*.

## 6. Allegations against a member of staff

Any allegation against a member of staff will be treated seriously and investigated immediately. An initial investigation will take place to determine the exact nature of the allegation. Advice will be sought from Edinburgh Council Children and Families Social Care Direct. If appropriate, the member of staff will be suspended pending the final outcome of the investigation. Following the preliminary investigation, if there is evidence to substantiate allegations, disciplinary action will be taken. If the allegations made are found to be unsubstantiated, all relevant parties will be informed, and it shall be made clear that the member of staff is exonerated. Any allegations against a member of staff that are substantiated will be reported to the Care Inspectorate or to Education Scotland and they will be kept informed of the outcome of any investigations. The relevant regulatory body – Scottish Social Services Council or General Teaching Council Scotland – will also be informed and may become involved.

We take child protection issues very seriously and we will take action against anybody making allegations that are found to be malicious.

## Summary

This policy aims to set out how we make sure EMAS is a safe environment and what we do if we have any concerns. The **three main points** are:

- The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in our school is everyone's responsibility
- Make sure you are up to date with current guidance and registered as required
- Always ask the Principal (Child Protection Coordinator) if you have concerns or need advice or support. You and also use the contacts listed in Section 4. **You have a personal and professional responsibility to report any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child, young person or member of staff's behaviour**

Full Guidance is set out in the Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Appendix 1: Definitions of Child abuse and Child neglect

Appendix 2: EMAS Safeguarding procedures - raising a concern

Appendix 3: GIRFEC: Wellbeing Concern Form

(<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/14563/girfec-templates>)

Appendix 4: Reporting a child concern to child protection services

Appendix 5: Chronology Template