



ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR

02/2006

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'SAFE AND WELL' – NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION AUTHORITIES (1)

This circular is the first in a series of circulars issued to schools concerning '*Safe and Well*' – the new national child protection guidance from the Scottish Executive.

This circular highlights key issues for schools and the Education Authority regarding child protection and draws attention to new procedures regarding children missing from education which require implementation at school level.

It is therefore essential that Head Teachers make themselves fully aware of the contents of the *Safe and Well* National Child Protection Guidance.

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1.0 Introduction

Safe & Well - A handbook for staff, schools and education authorities (2005) does not replace the current guidance given in 'Highland Inter-agency Child Protection Guidance; *Safe and Well* is very important additional guidance in addressing child abuse. The handbook details benchmark requirements relating to the care and welfare of children and child protection issues which will significantly shape our thinking with regard to child protection issues at school and authority level, and gives supplementary advice on procedures which should be adopted.

Our current guidance detailed in Highland Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines should be followed.

The Scottish Executive guidance is built around The Charter for Children, The Children's Pledge and The National Framework for Standards.

2.0 Key Points

The handbook highlights that:

- Every adult in Scotland has a role in ensuring all our children and young people live safely and can reach their full potential.
- Teachers and school staff provide support to children and young people in their daily work and have a vital role in protecting children and young people.
- School staff must be effectively prepared and supported for their role.
- Schools must have appropriate policies and practices that help to keep young persons safe and well.
- New procedures have been developed by the Scottish Executive for children missing from education.
- Although specifically for schools and education authorities, the handbook confirms that best practice in Child Protection is based on good inter-agency working.

3.0 Main Points in the Guidance

- (i) **Child Protection Co-ordinator**
Every school to have a Child Protection Co-ordinator. The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is to ensure staff maintain an awareness of child protection issues and to know when and how to refer children when there are concerns. **Highland policy of having a designated Child Protection Officer per establishment fulfils this recommendation.**
- (ii) **Pupil Progress Records (PPRs)**
Systems must be put in place by schools to ensure that PPRs are read immediately for new pupils. This is to ensure that schools are aware of any issues surrounding children which need to be addressed. If PPRs are not received within 10 days this must be followed up.
- (iii) **School handbook**
Schools require to have a clear statement in their school handbook on the expectation of parents informing the school if their child(ren) are absent. Where a pupil is missing from school but not declared absent by the parent, the school should have in place a clear procedure to investigate the missing child's whereabouts. **Further guidance will be issued on this matter.** Schools must also include in their school handbook a statement outlining child protection procedures.

(iv) **School Policies and Plans**

Schools should regularly update and review their policies and plans involving all staff at all levels in discussion and development. **Section 5, Page 18 of the Safe & Well Handbook gives helpful advice and policy on whole school checklists which should be used in auditing current policies and practices.**

(v) **Child Protection procedures**

Schools need to provide information for children, young people and parents regarding Child Protection procedures. **Leaflets for children and parents have been prepared and will be available to schools for distribution in August 2006. The leaflets will cover child protection procedures for parents, confidentiality/Who We Can Tell for pupils and staff.**

A key new development stemming from the guidance was the establishment of a Children Missing Education national service and detailed new procedures to be implemented at school, area, council-wide and national level for tracing children missing education.

Detailed guidance on Children Missing from Education and non-attendance at school will be issued in session 2006/2007.