



**CHILD PROTECTION**

**AT**

**GORDONSTOUN**

**ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE**

Gordonstoun provides an environment where everyone's wellbeing is protected and promoted; where all are safe, trusted, respected and valued; where appropriate support can be accessed immediately; and where everyone's viewpoint is taken seriously.

**If it is suspected that a young person is at risk of significant harm, the Child Protection Team must be alerted immediately.**

These brief notes of guidance summarise the essential points of the School's approach to promoting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people.

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# WELLBEING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY:

## Getting it right for every child at Gordonstoun

All children and young people have the right to be cared for, to be protected from harm and abuse, and to live and thrive in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met.

At Gordonstoun, our Wellbeing and Child Protection policy is based upon the GIRFEC approach and compliant with the Children and Young People's Act (Scotland) 2014, which includes making reference to the ongoing development of this legislation. GIRFEC involves early, proactive intervention in order to create a supportive environment for the children in our care and identify any additional support that may be required as early as possible. Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Gordonstoun feels it is appropriate to provide a Named Person service for every child or young person in the school's care.

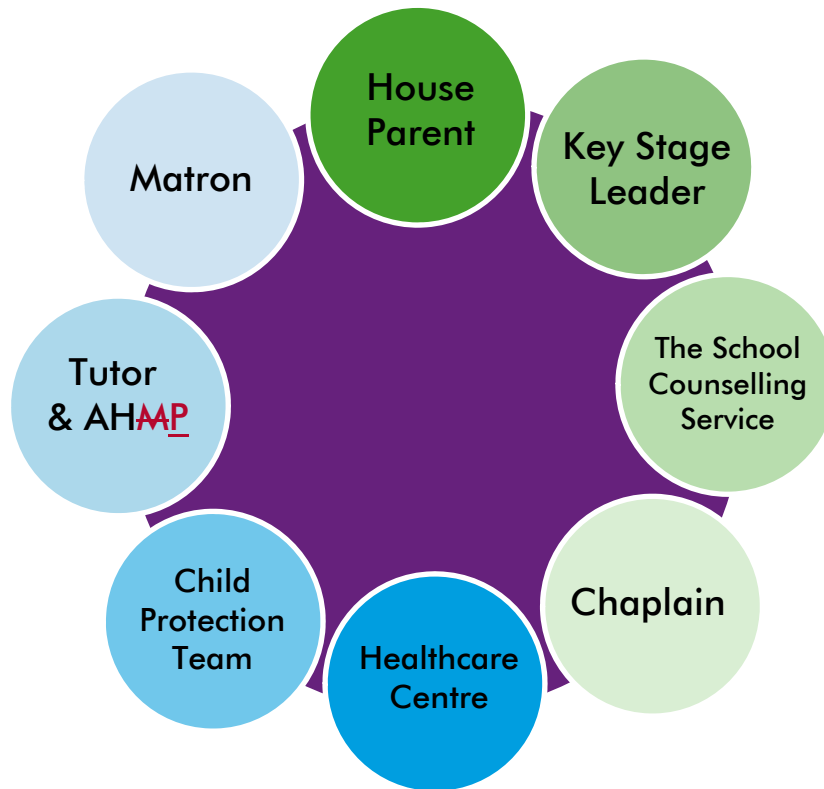
**At Gordonstoun, it is our policy to ensure that wellbeing concerns are identified early and appropriate measures taken to support the child or young person about whom concerns have been expressed.**

## DEFINITIONS

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Scottish Law, the School works on the basis that we have legal responsibilities for the welfare of children and young people up to the age of 18. Pupils aged 18 or over are legally adults. Within the School context, however, we continue to take pastoral responsibility for the wellbeing and welfare of all students enrolled in the School.

## THE TEAM AROUND THE CHILD

Gordonstoun recognises, in accordance with best practice and the Scottish Government guidance, that the wellbeing and welfare of children and young people depends upon **co-ordinated, positive support processes being facilitated by all adults around a child**. The full network of support around a child or young person at Gordonstoun is represented in the diagram below. Any and all of these key supportive individuals or pastoral teams will be involved as required, to ensure the wellbeing and welfare of the children and young people in our care is assured.



**Central to these processes is a commitment to ensuring the child/young person and their family are involved fully and consulted at every stage in the co-ordination of support and planning.**

The GIRFEC tools are used regularly in internal **Wellbeing Review Meetings** for purposes of planning care and support around a child. These meetings result in the development of a Child's Plan, which includes specified desired outcomes and linked, individually assigned actions for the team around the child. Parents and the child/young person are wherever possible invited to contribute to wellbeing assessments and plans. The Head of School, the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors are informed of concerns as appropriate.

## WHAT IS A WELLBEING CONCERN?

A child or young person has a wellbeing need if their wellbeing is, or is at risk of, being adversely affected by any matter.

A wellbeing concern may be identified by the child or young person, or by anyone who knows or supports the child or young person, and can be identified for many reasons, such as (but not limited to) the following:

- a) child or young person may be worried, anxious or upset about an event/set of circumstances, including socio-economic circumstances;
- b) parent/carer/family member or member of the pastoral team may have noticed a change in the child or young person's behaviour, demeanour or developmental progress;
- c) parent/carer/member of the pastoral team may have concerns about the impact of an event/ set of circumstances;
- d) member of school staff/professional or practitioner from a support service may have concerns for a child or young person's health, or may have noticed a change in their behaviour, demeanour, progress or achievement;

A wellbeing concern will arise from observation or assessment which indicates that one or more aspects of wellbeing is, or is at risk of being, adversely affected. Professional judgement based on experience, training and information about the child or young person, and their circumstances, will be key to identifying wellbeing concerns.

In some cases, a single observation or incident may be judged to represent a risk to wellbeing and be considered a concern. In other cases, the context of the observation or assessment, and wider knowledge of the child's general wellbeing and circumstances may either heighten or reduce the concern.

The nature of the concern will be specific to the individual child, their age, stage of development and circumstances, so what represents a wellbeing concern for one child, may not be judged a concern for another child.

# PROCEDURE: HOW DO WE IDENTIFY WELLBEING CONCERNS?

## The Wellbeing Indicators

To support staff in identifying wellbeing concerns, eight indicators of wellbeing have been identified as areas in which children and young people need to progress in order to do well, now and in the future.

The Wellbeing Indicators are an important part of the GIRFEC national practice model and should be used by staff at Gordonstoun consciously and overtly when

- a. Identifying a wellbeing concern
- b. Discussing wellbeing with children, young people, parents/carers and other professionals



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AT GORDONSTOUN

## What is the connection between wellbeing and child protection?

### Wellbeing and Welfare

Welfare, as it relates to children and young people, is a term that is often used in the context of identifying a need for compulsory intervention from social services in response to child protection concerns. In terms of the Scottish Government policy on children and families, welfare and wellbeing are different, in that wellbeing is a broader, more holistic concept.

Links between welfare and wellbeing exist across the eight wellbeing indicators, and while a child protection response may be required to make sure a child is safe and their immediate welfare needs are addressed, **child protection is not something which sits separately from wellbeing**. A series of low-level indicators of wellbeing need (whether obviously related or not) taken together can amount to a child protection issue. **Child protection requires taking immediate action to safeguard a child where an assessment indicates that the child may be at risk of significant harm or neglect**. The child's wider wellbeing should also be assessed to ensure their current and future holistic needs are considered.

**'Child protection' means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a *likelihood* or *risk* of significant harm from abuse or neglect.**

All staff who work and/or come into contact with children and their families have a role to play in child protection. **It is the policy at Gordonstoun that all child protection concerns must be reported promptly to the designated Child Protection Officer, who will report onwards to outside agencies (Social Care and/or Police), as appropriate.**

Staff responsibility will range from identifying and sharing wellbeing as well as child protection concerns about a child or young person, to making an active contribution to supporting the child or young person and their family. The core principles, values and shared standards of practice that form the foundation for effective, collaborative wellbeing support under GIRFEC extend to underpin child protection principles and practice at Gordonstoun, **with the overriding principle being the requirement to recognise and report possible abuse appropriately and immediately, in order to safeguard and protect the children and young people in our care.**

## ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION RISK

Child protection is closely linked to the risk of significant harm. 'Significant harm' is a complex matter and subject to professional judgement, often based on a multi-agency assessment of the circumstances of the child and their family.

**Where there are concerns about harm, abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect, these must be shared by staff at Gordonstoun with the relevant agencies, so that they can decide together whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant.**

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the alleged abusive behaviour. The reactions, perceptions, wishes and feelings of the child/young person must also be considered, with account taken of their age and level of understanding. It is important to listen to what children/young people say, as well as to bear in mind that children/young people may have a strong desire to be loyal to their parents, carers or - especially in a boarding establishment - a member of staff who may also hold some power over the child. Steps must be taken to ensure that any accounts of adverse experiences given by children/young people are accurate and complete, and that they are recorded fully.

**Gordonstoun works very closely with the Locality Wellbeing Officer and the Public Protection Unit (which includes child protection experts from the police, social work and health) to seek advice immediately regarding wellbeing and child protection risk assessment, and to communicate any information that may pertain to the protection of children/young people from harm. More details of this, and relevant contact numbers, can be found further in this booklet.**



# CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AT GORDONSTOUN

## Role of Staff at Gordonstoun

Teachers and pastoral staff at Gordonstoun have significant day-to-day contact with children and young people and so are well placed to observe physical and psychological changes in a child that could indicate abuse, and to contribute to the assessment of vulnerable children. School staff may be the first to be aware that families are experiencing difficulties, especially given the close relationships that can build up between the child/young person and the house team caring for them while they are at school. Staff should be alert to signs that a child may be being abused. (A list of indicators of possible abuse can be found in Appendix 8 of the Wellbeing and Child Protection Policy and Procedures document, located in Pastoral/Child Protection in Staff Resources on the school intranet system and in offices of staff managers.)

When a member of staff has reason to believe that a child's safety is compromised or they are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm, that member of staff must report these concerns with the school's Child Protection team as soon as possible, on the same working day as the concern arises, and record this referral using the School's Wellbeing Information System. If a member of staff does not feel comfortable reporting to school staff, they must report directly to the Child Protection team within the local authority. Staff are informed of these alternative reporting routes at induction and in child protection training. All relevant numbers are published in this information booklet, in the Pastoral/Child Protection folder on Staff Resources and posted around the School.

**A member of staff who is concerned about a child in these circumstances must inform the Child Protection team that the child appears to have concerns regarding possible abuse. These concerns will be reported on appropriately, to Police, Social Work or Health as necessary, to ensure concerns and reports of abuse are dealt with immediately and with the child or young person's best interests at the centre.**

## What to do if a member of staff has concerns or a child tells of abuse

1. Listen sympathetically and with care.
2. Reassure the child that they are not to blame.
3. Do not show disbelief.
4. Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality.
5. Take the allegation seriously.
6. Affirm the child's feelings as expressed
7. Avoid being judgemental about the information
8. Report to the Child Protection Team, making appropriate use of the Wellbeing Information System to facilitate the accurate recording of the concerns.

If the child draws back from speaking to the staff member, the child should be informed of the possibility of making a private and confidential telephone call to ChildLine on 0800 1111.

### CHECKLIST FOR STAFF

**RECOGNISE** when the child's behaviour/demeanour is a cause for concern;

**RESPOND** to the person expressing the concern;

**REPORT** the matter to the Child Protection Team or Named Person (the Houseparent) on the same working day (immediately if you feel the child is in immediate danger);

**RECORD** in detail what has been disclosed, including what was seen and heard, and the time. Record signs of physical injury or other signs of distress in clear detail. Record contemporaneously any comment by the child about an incident or how an injury occurred, quoting words actually used, making appropriate use of the Wellbeing Information System. This ensures the School has a secure, dated, individualised record.

# INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORDING

## Policy and Procedures at Gordonstoun

Sharing appropriate information is an essential component of promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children. To secure the best outcomes for children, staff at Gordonstoun are trained to understand when and with whom it is appropriate to seek or share information, how much information to share and what to do with that information. This applies not only between different agencies, but also within the School. At the same time, children and their families have a right to know when information about them is being shared. Where possible, their consent will be sought, unless doing so would increase the risk to a child or others, or prejudice any current or subsequent criminal investigation.

Privacy and confidentiality are governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the:

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- Professional Codes of Conduct, including the Gordonstoun Code of Conduct signed by all members of staff employed.

With regard to information held and shared that is relevant to a child or young person's wellbeing and welfare, Gordonstoun operates on the basis of the simple general principle: 'Nothing about me, without me'. Students are encouraged to talk about their concerns and are given the opportunity to participate in planning around how their needs are met, their rights protected, their development nurtured and information about them is held and shared.

Because of the responsibilities they have to children in their care, staff at Gordonstoun never give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to an adult or a child. The member of staff will not be dismissive and will seek to retain the child's trust by explaining that, whilst every effort will be made to respect a desire for confidentiality, if there are serious concerns about a child's wellbeing and protection, it will be necessary for that information to be passed on to the appropriate authorities. It can be encouraging to reassure those seeking advice that the staff at Gordonstoun are trained not to breach confidence without letting that person - child, young person or adult - know that they must do so. It may be necessary and legal, however, to share information without consent if there is a risk of significant harm.

# INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORDING

## Policy and Procedures at Gordonstoun

Staff at Gordonstoun are also trained, in accordance with laws of confidentiality and consent, that when a child has sufficient capacity to make a decision then it is important to respect the child's privacy and not disclose (perhaps even to a parent) any information that the child would wish to be kept in confidence. The School is committed, however, to ensuring that every effort will always be made to involve parents, and will undertake to share information with parents pertaining to their child's wellbeing under the requirements of the Act. The School always encourages children/young people to communicate transparently with their parents.

**At Gordonstoun, only information that is relevant to promoting, supporting or safeguarding the wellbeing and welfare of a child/young person will be sought, held or shared.**

**If any concerns arise that the child may be at risk of significant harm, child protection procedures must be followed immediately and Police and/or Social Work contacted without delay. To guarantee this, staff will follow the school child protection procedure detailed above. Direct contact numbers to Police/Social Work are also supplied to all staff.**



## THE WELLBEING INFORMATION SYSTEM (WIS)

The need for appropriate records to be kept of information sharing and decisions made about further sharing is met through the Wellbeing Information System (WIS), which has been developed by the School to require specific justifications for all information sharing, and for bespoke sharing, which will be done with the knowledge of the Named Person.

System access controls are in place on the Wellbeing Information System to ensure only appropriate information is shared. All wellbeing records need to be assigned visibility permission levels that are increasingly restricted, with data sharing tests applied at every stage. Security procedures are in place for the Wellbeing Information System, including a user password protected double log-in process (staff log onto the school intranet and log separately into the Wellbeing Information System); access being restricted to particular machines that have been risk assessed by IT Services; a 'timing out' facility embedded into the programme; staff seeing only what their visibility level allows. These visibility levels are regularly discussed and risk assessed by the Deputy Head Pastoral Care, the Assistant Head Wellbeing, members of the Child Protection Team and the Director of IT Services, who is the School's Data Controller. They are set according to the pastoral relevance of staff forming the team around the child.

Information shared with the Named Person by health services is stored safely and securely within the Wellbeing Information System, using the system access controls detailed above. A process of auditing and monitoring use of the Wellbeing Information System has been established. This involves annual review of selected wellbeing files by the School Executive and the appointed Wellbeing and Child Protection Governor. This audit is recorded formally and is used to feed into staff training and development of the WIS, to improve outcomes for the child/young person. Periodic audits will also be undertaken as part of Care Inspectorate visits.

## IN SUMMARY

**Procedures and guidance cannot in themselves protect children: a competent, skilled and confident workforce (together with a vigilant public) can and must protect children from abuse.**

**ALL members of staff at Gordonstoun have a moral and legal responsibility to maintain a high level of vigilance and training with regard to child protection awareness and reporting protocols. They must report child protection concerns immediately.**

# WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT SHARES A CONCERN, MAKES A DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATION

**Take the allegation seriously and support the student.**

**Do not promise confidentiality** (if the student decides not to continue, you should still seek advice).

**Ask open-ended questions** to get basic information. (When did it happen? Where did it happen? What happened? Who was involved?)

**Do not investigate yourself**, just get the facts.

**Observe** the student's behaviour and demeanour.

**Report** your concerns to the necessary staff (Houseparent, DCPO, Senior Staff on Duty)

**Record** in detail what you have seen and heard using the Wellbeing Information System, trying to record the **actual words used**.

**Alert the Child Protection Team, immediately and directly, if your concerns are of an urgent nature.**

## **THE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**Designated Child Protection Officer & Head of Junior School: Cath Lyall**

Email: [lyallc@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:lyallc@gordonstoun.org.uk)

Phone: ext 5041 or 01343 837971 (o) or 01343 837972 (h) or 07825 411458 (m)

**Junior School House Parent: Emma Humes**

Email: [humese@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:humese@gordonstoun.org.uk)

Phone: 01343 837975 (o) or 01343 837795 (h)

## **THE SENIOR SCHOOL**

**Designated Child Protection Officer & Deputy Head (Pastoral): Philip Schonken**

Email: [schonkenp@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:schonkenp@gordonstoun.org.uk)

Phone: ext 5032 or 01343 837962 (o) or 07917 448737 (m)

**Assistant Head Boarding: Pete Richardson**

Email: [richardsonp@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:richardsonp@gordonstoun.org.uk)

Phone: ext 5014 or 01343 837944 (o) or 07795 197099 (m)

**Assistant Head Wellbeing: Suzy Morton**

Email: [mortons@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:mortons@gordonstoun.org.uk)

Phone: ext 7813 or 01343 837813 (o) or 07920 238707 (m)

**The Wellbeing and Child Protection Governor: Victoria Ayre**

Phone: 07712 430094 (m)

## REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING ADVICE

### DO...

- Treat all people with respect & remember their right to personal privacy without compromising their safety.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse & report any allegations or indications of abuse immediately.
- Listen sympathetically & take what the student tells you seriously.
- If you have a concern about a student or about an incident, report this, then record it on the WIS, or via your line manager.
- Choose the language you use carefully to avoid any chance of misinterpretation.
- Avoid physical contact with students, unless it is appropriate as part of your responsibilities.
- If restraint is necessary for the safety of a student, this should be at the minimal level possible.
- Try to minimise the occasions when you are working alone with a student, and always follow the wellbeing and child protection guidelines.
- Be aware of how your actions may be viewed by others and ensure that your actions are fair, reasonable, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.
- Ensure that any online communication with children and young people is solely through the school systems.
- In order to protect your own and the School's reputation, please consider carefully all aspects of your online profile.
- Report any unwelcome attention or correspondence.
- Be aware of the law on Breach of Trust – any relationship with a student of a sexual nature is a criminal offence.
- Ensure that all activities you run involving students are appropriately risk assessed.

### DO NOT...

- Fail to report a concern immediately & appropriately.
- Indulge in any inappropriate behaviour or make remarks open to misinterpretation, particularly of a sexual nature.
- Ask leading questions or investigate an allegation.
- Promise to keep anything secret.
- Allow yourself to be drawn in to inappropriate behaviour (such as fun fights or horseplay).
- Interact with a student via any form of social media.
- Take, display or use photographs of students without their permission, or store images of students on personal devices.
- Agree to give any medication to students unless you have specific permission to do so. This must then be recorded as per the School's policies.

# PROTECTING CHILDREN TEAM AT MORAY COUNCIL

Work relating to Child Protection Investigations and Youth Justice is now picked up by the Children and Families Access Team. The team are based at the Joint Child Protection Unit, Elgin. Child Protection referrals or queries are made through the Access Team as per the Child Protection Referral Flow Chart. Please note that should a member of staff not be available within Triage then the referrer should contact the Police Scotland on 101.

How to Access the Service: Children and Families Access Team - 01343 554370

## Joint Child Protection Unit

The Joint Child Protection Unit (JCPU) is based in Elgin and covers the whole of Moray. The majority of children are loved and nurtured by their parents or carers. The Joint Child Protection Unit has the responsibility to investigate cases of actual or suspected abuse against children.

The Unit consists of Social Workers, Police Officers and Health professionals who work together and are experienced in working with children, young people and their families on child protection matters. The type of concerns that the unit investigate include Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect. At all times during the investigation the safety and well-being of the child is the most important issue.

We all have a responsibility to protect children and young people from harm. If you have any concerns about something that may be happening to a child it is important that we are made aware of this as soon as is possible. Please do not be worried about contacting your local Social Work, Police, Health or Education office as it is important that we all work together to ensure that children are kept safe.

**If you have concerns about a child and wish to report outside Gordonstoun please contact:**

### Child Protection in Moray

01343 554 370 (during office hours)

03457 565 656 (Social Work - Emergency Out of Hours)

Alternatively, you can email [childrensaccessteam@moray.gov.uk](mailto:childrensaccessteam@moray.gov.uk)

**Police Scotland: 101**





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