

MCR Pathways

Safeguarding Policy Scotland

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Date this version approved by Management: | 19 March 2024 |
| Next review date: | March 2025 |

Principles

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and to protect them from harm. This means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. This includes protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child. Every Local Authority and school will have its own specific child protection procedures and protocol. MCR staff engaged in work with young people will ensure they fully understand the policy and protocol, and keep abreast of any updates and changes, of the region or locality in which they work.

Safer recruitment

MCR safeguards and protects all young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices:

- Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with young people
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection, and fully understand the school's and local authority's safeguarding procedures.
- All new entrants employment is subject to two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer.
- If any employees or volunteers have lived or worked outside the UK for 3 months or more in the past 5 years, a further overseas check is also required to obtain the most comprehensive level of criminal records check from the country that they have previously lived and/or worked in before employment or volunteering commences

Safeguarding in Practice

All MCR staff and volunteers who have contact with young people will have PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups; Scotland) checks before engaging in activities involving young people. All MCR staff and any partners hold the principles of safeguarding in the highest regard. This is particularly important considering the vulnerable cohort of young people that MCR supports.

Pathways Coordinators

Pathways Coordinators develop relationships with MCR young people through weekly group mentoring in S1-S2, and remain in regular contact with them for the duration of their time in secondary school. As such, MCR young people will develop trust in Pathways Coordinators and may feel comfortable to disclose information to them. Pathways Coordinators will attend annual training with their school colleagues in the school in which they work.

As part of their induction, Pathways Coordinators are trained on the principles of [National guidance for child protection in Scotland \(2021\) - updated 2023](#), the Child protection / Safeguarding policy of their school, and the process whereby they would report a concern.

Should a young person or mentor raise a concern with them, Pathways Coordinators (PCs) will follow their school's Child protection / Safeguarding procedure and policy. Following this, as soon as possible thereafter and by the end of the day, Pathways Coordinators will also make a record of their actions on the young person's Pathfinder record. PCs will also notify their Programme Manager that there was a child protection issue by contacting them directly by the end of the day.

Mentors

From S3 upwards, young people develop relationships with their mentors built on trust and respect. Quite often, an MCR mentor is the *one trusted adult* in the young person's life. As such, young people may feel confident and comfortable in sharing concerns with their mentor. All MCR mentors will receive an overview of child protection and details about their school's procedures to report a concern as part of their induction. In the event that a young person shares a concern with their mentor, the mentor will follow the process below:

1. Listen to the young person. Thank them for sharing and reassure them that they have done the right thing. Finish the mentoring session early if they feel the concern might necessitate immediate action. Explain to the young person that they will need to share the concern with their Pathways Coordinator and school Child Protection Lead so that they can support them further
2. Record their concerns, writing down what the young person told them as close to verbatim as possible. Ensure they record the date and time the young person spoke with them, and their full name using the schools reporting documents/well being concern forms
3. Before leaving school report to the young person's Pathways Coordinator. If the Pathways Coordinator is unavailable, contact the school's Child Protection Coordinator via the reception desk

As part of the MCR programme, following each mentoring session, all mentors provide weekly feedback to the Pathways Coordinator via electronic form submission. This provides another opportunity for the Pathways Coordinator to pick up any nuanced information regarding mentee's wellbeing and safety.

No detail of any child protection or safeguarding concerns are to be recorded in detail and should be reported immediately before leaving the school premises

Programme Managers

Programme Managers (PM) complete annual safeguarding training with one of their Pathways Coordinators and school colleagues, rotating attendance through the different schools in their region. They are also responsible for ensuring all Pathways Coordinators in their region attend annual safeguarding training in their school. Programme Managers will maintain up to date checks (scheduled in calendars each term) contact details of each school's Child Protection (CP) Coordinator. The CP Coordinator will be contacted should something be reported to MCR staff that happens outside of the school day along with one of MCRs Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).

Should the Programme Manager (PM) be unable to contact the CP Coordinator within an acceptable amount of time (dependent on the professional judgement and support from MCRs DSLs taking into consideration each situation's individual circumstances), the PM/DSL will then be obliged to follow the process below:

- **Contact the local Children's social work team.** Contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in, are included at the end of this document, and are shared at induction
- **Contact the local Children's Reporter.** Children's Reporters are local, independent officials who can decide if any legal interventions need to be made to protect a child. Children's Reporters offices can be found on [the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration 2018](#)
- **Contact Police Scotland (dial 999)** if there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger.

It is not the remit of MCR staff or volunteers to investigate child disclosures, evaluate the grounds for concern or seek proof. It is far better to make a referral that is deemed no further action needed, than to not refer at all.

It is the responsibility of all MCR staff, particularly Programme Managers, to ensure that concerns are dealt with in an appropriate amount of time and in a manner that satisfies their professional duty of care.

Extended Leadership Team

The Extended Leadership Team (ELT) comprises individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those having previously worked in senior positions within Local Authority education services. At all times there will be at least one member of the SLT trained to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) level (level 3; the highest level equivalent to Designated Safeguarding Officer in Scotland). At least one member of the ELT participating in MCR recruitment processes for new staff is trained in Safer recruitment. The current DSLs are :

Natalie Smith - Head of Schools East
natalie.smith@mcrpathways.org
07500 034872

Caroline Purves - Head of Schools North
caroline.purves@mcrpathways.org
07483 950815

In the need to raise safeguarding concerns relating to the CEO , please raise with the Chair, Nick Walters.

nwalters@mcrholdings.com
07940 573198

Group work

MCR young people will learn how to keep themselves safe as part of the school curriculum in Scotland. This learning is built on and developed further by Pathways Coordinators as part of weekly Group Work sessions in S1-S2. In these sessions, young people will engage in shared learning focused on wellbeing, emotional literacy and healthy relationships. Learning is facilitated through exploration and discussion of topical issues, case studies, research and engaging in practical small group challenges.

All other MCR staff

This includes, but is not limited to, staff that work in Mentoring Services, the Partnership and Recruitment teams, the Central team and staff helping at events. These colleagues will follow the steps below:

1. Listen to the young person. Thank them for sharing with them and reassure them that they have done the right thing. Explain that the staff member will need to share their concern with their Pathways Coordinator or member of Senior leadership at their school
2. Record their concerns using the schools recording documents, writing down what the young person told them as close to verbatim as possible. Ensure they record the date and time the young person spoke with them, and their full name
3. Contact the young person's Pathways Coordinator. If the Pathways Coordinator is unavailable contact the region's Programme Manager. Should the PM be unavailable, contact a member of MCR's dedicated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Bullying

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour that MCR does not tolerate at any level. If you work directly with young people and are concerned about bullying, please refer to their school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

If you are concerned about bullying in the workplace, please refer to MCR's [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Multi-agency working

MCR staff will always participate in multi-agency working to support young people and families. Wherever needed and requested by the school, Pathways Coordinators may

participate in multi-agency meetings to support young people. Support for attending these meetings is available from our PC Development Leads or regional Programme Managers. Individual schools and local authorities' approaches and processes will always be followed.

Child Protection / Safeguarding data sharing with other agencies will always be done so following individual school's / local authorities guidelines and processes.

Local authority safeguarding information

| | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|
| Scotland | <u>Aberdeen</u> <u>Aberdeenshire</u> <u>Argyll and Bute</u> <u>Clackmannanshire</u> <u>Dundee</u> <u>East Dunbartonshire</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>Falkirk</u> <u>Fife</u> <u>Glasgow</u> <u>Highland</u> <u>Inverclyde</u> <u>North Ayrshire</u> <u>Perth & Kinross</u> <u>Shetland</u> <u>Stirling</u> <u>South Lanarkshire</u> <u>West Dunbartonshire</u> | | |
|----------|---|--|--|