

Child Protection Policy

Midmar School



UNCRC Article 18: 'Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by giving them the help they need, especially if the child's parents work.'

'UNCRC Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.'

(UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Updated: 18 August 2022

Midmar School

Child Protection Statement

Context

Protecting children and young people and meeting their needs is everyone's job. We're all responsible for reporting concerns about a child's welfare

Aberdeenshire Guidelines for protecting children and young people form part of every employee's Terms and Conditions of Service and therefore apply to all staff and to all working activities at Midmar Primary School.

The Guidelines which will be adhered to by all members of staff are based on the national guidelines which are set within the wider context of GIRFEC, The Early Years Framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and set out common standards for protecting children through interagency working.

Introduction

Children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations. This policy guides the school in protecting those rights to help ensure that the child is kept safe. This helps our children have the best start in life, to flourish and become:

- Responsible Citizens;
- Successful Learners;
- Confident Individuals;
- Effective Contributors.

The Children and Young People (SCOTLAND) Act 2014 placed certain aspects of the GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) approach into law. The Act is based on the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children and Young People's rights and wellbeing are at the centre of how children are supported in Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Council follow the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland which was updated in 2021.

Staff Roles and Training

The Head Teacher has undertaken Aberdeenshire training. All staff engage with an annual update on the first day back after the summer break and can access additional training on ALDO (Aberdeenshire Staff Training portal).

At Midmar Primary the **Head Teacher, Elizabeth Shepherd, is the Child Protection Co-Ordinator** and has overall responsibility for all matters of child protection. In her absence our QIO, Cluster Lead; Moira Lawson or QIM (Quality Improvement Manager Kay MacDonald, will be contacted.

Staff and volunteers in schools are well placed to observe physical, psychological or emotional changes in children that may indicate some form of child abuse or neglect. Also because of the close and trusting relationship that frequently exists between staff and pupils it may be that a child who is experiencing some form of abuse will share information in some way with them.

It is vital that all staff know what action to take should they have any concerns about a child or should they receive information which suggests that the child may be experiencing some form of abuse. The procedures outlined in this policy are designed both to safeguard the wellbeing of the child and to ensure that all school staff know how to respond, if they are concerned or become aware that a child may have been abused.

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed each year. Staff will receive a regular annual briefing on the policy, its operation and any amendments to it.

Staff joining the school during the session will be issued with the policy as part of their induction and line managers should ensure this is the case.

Should anyone wish to talk further about Child Protection and the safety of children they are welcome to contact the Head Teacher. Where there is a possibility that a child could be at risk of abuse or neglect, the school is required to refer the child to Social Work, the Police or the Reporter. Under these circumstances the parent would **not** normally be consulted first.

Getting it Right For Every Child In Aberdeenshire

All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse (UNCRC Articles 18 and 19) to grow up in a safe environment in which their

rights are respected and their needs are met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their wellbeing is paramount.

Getting it right for every child in Aberdeenshire is the local route by which the Scottish Government policy "Getting it right for every child" is delivered in Aberdeenshire.

It sets out a vision that we will:

- put the child (and their family) at the centre of everything we (Children's Services) do.
- provide earlier intervention in order to ensure that all children achieve their potential.
- achieve the highest standards of joint working and collaboration to improve outcomes for children.
- take personal responsibility for ensuring that all children achieve their potential.
- focus on improving outcomes for children and young people.

In order to reach their potential our children and young people need to be:

- **Safe,**
- **Healthy,**
- **Active,**
- **Nurtured,**
- **Achieving,**
- **Responsible,**
- **Respected and**
- **Included**

The work on child protection that we carry out within Aberdeenshire Council and with partners is delivered to keep children **safe**. Where we believe that a child may be at risk we will act quickly using our child protection procedures to keep the child **safe**. We will act to ensure that children are protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

What is Child Abuse and Child Neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust....." (National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, page 20)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family, in the community or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

"Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission"

(Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility)

Types of Abuse

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021), pages 20 - 22 references different types of abuse. Types of abuse are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Child Trafficking
- Criminal Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriage

Indicators of risk include Domestic Abuse, Parental Substance Misuse, Parental Alcohol Misuse, Parental Mental Health, Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Non-engaging family, Child Placing Self at Risk, Neglect, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) and Forced Marriage.

3 key Questions in Child Protection

1. Is the child or young person at immediate risk?
2. What is placing the child at immediate risk?
3. What needs to happen to remove this risk?

If the answer to question 1 is yes, then Child Protection protocols must be followed immediately.

How to respond to a Child Protection Disclosure

- Observe
- Listen
- Record
- Report

Child Protection Procedures

a) Designated Person

Each school is required to have a designated person responsible for the co-ordination and management of all matters relating to Child Protection. The designated person for **Midmar School** is the **Head Teacher, Elizabeth Shepherd**. In handling cases of suspected child abuse the Child Protection Coordinator works closely with staff in the school, the Council and partners such as NHS, Police Scotland and Social Work.

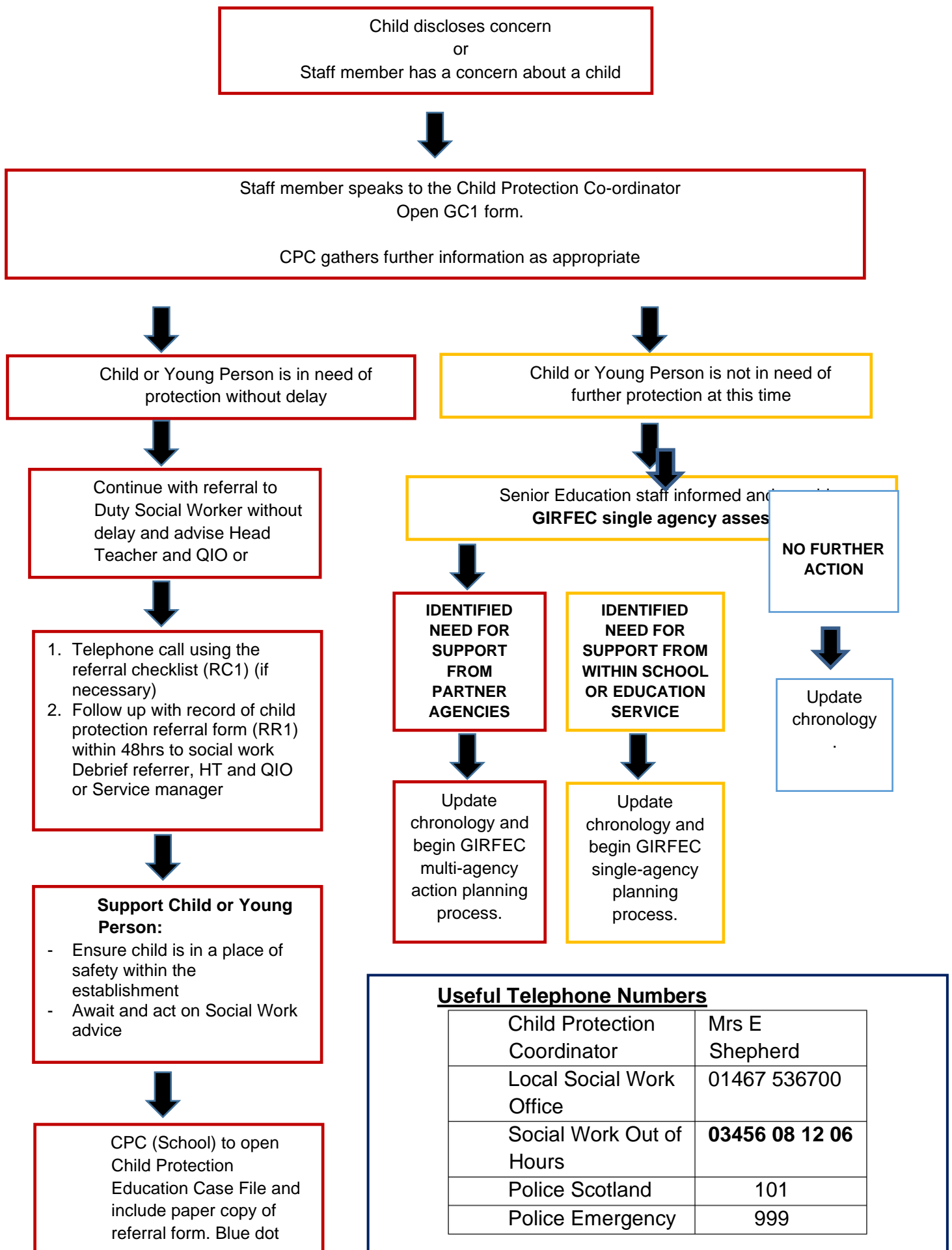
Any member of staff who is concerned about a possible allegation of child abuse should speak to the Child Protection Coordinator. In the absence of the Child Protection Coordinator, staff should contact the **QIO Moira Lawson**. If you become aware of an incident out of hours, or it is not possible to speak to a school contact, **DO NOT WAIT**. Immediately contact the school social work team, 'out of hours' Social Work, or the Police.

b) Procedures for school staff to follow in cases of possible child abuse

Full details of the steps that all staff must follow in cases of suspected child abuse are given in the following flow chart.

Child Protection Procedure in Education Flow Chart

Recognising actual or potential harm to a child



Useful Telephone Numbers

Child Protection Coordinator	Mrs E Shepherd
Local Social Work Office	01467 536700
Social Work Out of Hours	03456 08 12 06
Police Scotland	101
Police Emergency	999

1. A designated member of staff is responsible for co-ordinating action on child abuse within the establishment. Referrals should normally be through this designated person but every employee has the responsibility to make a direct referral if this is necessary. - Mrs Elizabeth Shepherd, Head Teacher
2. Any member of staff suspecting or identifying child abuse, should, without delay, contact the designated member of staff. If contacting the designated person implies delay beyond the end of the school day or community education session, an assessment should be made of the child's safety and, if necessary, a direct referral should be made.
3. Where the designated member of staff judges that there is evidence of abuse or potential danger to a child then he/she must ensure that Social Work is contacted (this to include discussion as to how parents are engaged). It is important that all staff understand that investigation only needs to establish evidence of the need to investigate abuse. A full inquiry by Education staff must be avoided because collection of evidence is a specialist Police/Social Work role. Inappropriate inquiries may prevent successful prosecution.
4. If it is considered that the child required immediate medical attention, contact the Health Centre, Health Visitor, School Doctor or Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital as appropriate. If there is a view that the child may risk further abuse if returned home, the Police and Social Work must be informed as soon as possible and preferably well before the end of the day.
5. When the designated member of staff considers that further investigation is required before suspicions can be confirmed or rejected, he/she can contact social work and any other agency who may be able to assist in any such inquiries or who may have information about the child or family. In particular the School Health Visitor and in Aberdeen the Home - School Liaison Officer, but also including the child's General Practitioner and, if actively involved in the case, Educational Psychologist.

The designated officer may also check the Child Protection Register.

(www.aberdeenshire-girfec.org)

6. A Head of Establishment may, of course, at any time draw to the attention of the Reporter (Authority Reporter - Aberdeenshire - 0131 244 8720) to the Children's

Panel the circumstances of a child who is believed to be in need of compulsory measures of care. Out of hours emergency number 03456 08 12 06

7. In all cases, incidents should be logged, action taken and recorded in written form using **Appendix 1**. A copy of any such report should be forwarded to the Head of Service designated for the school.

8. It is possible that employees are implicated in abuse. Indeed, any adult or child may be an abuser and research shows that some abuse may be perpetrated by women or men, or women and men acting in partnership. Disclosure should not be discounted because of the status or role of the alleged abuser.

9. A Chronology will be maintained for any concerns that occur on a day to day basis. These should be recorded using the Chronology Form, **Appendix 3**. Actions from the concerns should be followed up. Chronologies are also recorded in SEEMIS (Scottish Education Management information System) - Pastoral Notes.

Confidentiality

It is essential that staff do not promise confidentiality to a child or young person. Staff who become aware of a possible child protection case should discuss the matter only with the essential personnel referred to above. Any notes made by staff must be passed on to the designated person.

Parental/Carer Information

Parents/carers are informed that the school has a responsibility to take action if we think that any child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse. This information is given through a statement published annually in the School Prospectus. This statement informs parents that we are required to refer any cases of possible abuse or neglect directly to the Social Work Department, the Police or the Reporter. Parents are not normally informed if the school has to refer a child to one of these agencies.

Advice on dealing with disclosures

Children will decide for themselves if or when they will disclose information about situations which are worrying them. It is this person's role to reassure the child and gather the information which the child chooses to share with them.

The following guidance on dealing with disclosures are provided to assist staff who may have to respond, either as part of their work role or because they have been trusted by the child.

Listen to what the child has to say

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Do not interrupt, if the child is swearing, for example.
- Take notes

Reassure

- Reassure the child.
- Do not make promises you may not be able to keep, like *"I'll stay with you"*
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer.
- Provide reassurance and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example you could say: *"You're not to blame"*

Speaking to the child

- Do not 'interrogate' the child for full details. You are not investigating the allegation.
- Do not ask leading questions, for example:
"Did he touch your private parts?"
- Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do ask open questions like: *"Anything else to tell me?"*
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible
- All information recorded should be **clear, concise and factual**.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required later.
- **Record date, time, place**, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the **exact words used by the child**. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used rather than translating them
- Do not take photographs or video any injuries or bruises. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising
- Record statements and what you observe, rather than your interpretation or assumptions.
- Updating and maintaining a child's chronology should include any concerns which have been previously addressed by school. This can help- identify emerging child

protection concerns and also contributes to the wider assessment of risk / need in a child protection situation.

School Procedures

- Follow the School guidelines.
- Quickly contact the school Child Protection Coordinator or QIO
- Ensure you have briefed the Child Protection Coordinator or QIO.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Checks

The PVG scheme is a Scottish Government scheme. It helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children through paid or unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. The school follows Aberdeenshire Council's Policy on the application of the scheme. Staff and volunteers who work with children will need to be members of the PVG scheme.

JOINT INVESTIGATION - POLICE, SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

Initial Referral Discussion:

- Discuss with Social Work
- Decide at what stage parents/carers should be informed.
- Plan joint investigation in line with joint investigation guidance.

Joint Interviews

- Presence of person to support child.
- Consideration should be given to whether or not interviewing the child is the most appropriate first step, or whether an alternative course of action for example, interviewing other adults/children is more appropriate.
- The child may wish to have an adult present at the interview for support. This should not be the alleged perpetrator.

Parental consent

It is the responsibility of the Police and Social Worker carrying out the investigation to:-

- a) Arrange for the appropriate parent/carer to be informed of a referral alleging abuse.
- b) Where possible obtain their agreement for any interviews.

The School Child Protection Policy will be revised annually using the following checklist:

<u>Checklist:</u>	<u>Evidence</u>
1. Is there a named person responsible for Child Protection?	Mrs E Shepherd, Head Teacher
2. Is there a copy of the School/ Authority Child Protection Guidelines available for Teachers and new staff?	Staff Room Uploaded to GLOW
3. Is there an annual review of Child Protection requirements? 4. Are there arrangements to inform staff how to keep a chronology record? (Appendix 3)	Annually August In Service
5. Are there appropriate curriculum experiences where children may learn about the value of family life? 6. Well-being indicators are audited by pupils and action plans created and adhered to. 7. Pupil Voice opportunities are given to find out if children feel safe and/or what we can do.	Midmar School Health and Wellbeing (HWB) programme
8. Do children know who they can talk to about bullying and Child Protection matters?	Teachers/ Support staff / Family / Buddies / Friends 'Chatter Box' Climate for Learning Policy

For further information and Support:

Protecting Children in Aberdeenshire - 3 Booklets for Schools - on Arcadia

Reporting Child Protection Concerns - Initial Referral Discussions

National Child Protection Guidelines (2021)

Aberdeenshire GIRFEC website www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org

Appendix 1: Incident Log

Aberdeenshire Council

Education and Children's Services

School: _____

Name of Pupil: _____

DoB _____

Class / Stage: _____

Teacher: _____

Concerns

Reported by _____

Date _____

Report received by (HT) _____

Action (what, when, by whom)

Received by: _____

Date Filed in PPR: _____

Child Protection File

APPENDIX 2: Framework for Standards

Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Standard 1 | Children get the help they need when they need it. |
| Standard 2 | Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children. |
| Standard 3 | Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected. |
| Standard 4 | Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them. |
| Standard 5 | Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans. |
| Standard 6 | Professionals are competent and confident. |
| Standard 7 | Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children. |
| Standard 8 | Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness |

Appendix 3

Multi Agency Action Planning in Aberdeenshire - Chronology

Name of Child / Young Person	Date of Birth	Gender	Reference No.

LEAD PROFESSIONAL: _____

Start Date	Name / Designation	Agency	Address	Tel. No. and email

CHRONOLOGY

Date & time event happened	Event	Action	Source of information	Wellbeing indicator/s affected

Policy Reviewed with staff: Monday 22.8.22

Head Teacher: E. Shepherd

Teachers: J. Miller, A. Reid, G Sutherland

Support Staff: M. Black, L. Keir, S. McCullagh

Catering Staff: M. Marocchi

Janitor: A. Wilkinson