

# Child Protection Policy 2014

## Introduction

One of our school's main responsibilities is the protection of pupils in our care. We want all our pupils to feel that they work and play in a secure and caring environment, free from any kind of abuse or neglect. To this end we will:

- Ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Develop and then implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Support pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

## Rationale

We recognise that the teachers and other adults at the school are well placed to observe young people and note any signs and symptoms that could lead to the early detection of child abuse. The mutual respect, trust and confidence that develops between staff and pupils can lead to pupils wanting to discuss abuse that is occurring at home and elsewhere. This can lead to the protection of children at risk. We will include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for pupils to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Although we need to encourage partnership between home and school, the school acknowledges that the protection of the child is paramount. Parents and/or carers, pupils and staff should be aware that the school must take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of pupils and there may be occasions when outside agencies are consulted before parents and/or carers.

The school recognises the need to train all staff to be aware of the incidence, gravity, signs, symptoms, nature and categories of abuse and in the way to deal with the disclosure of abuse. Staff need to be aware of the school's procedures and the role of the Education Support Service and other agencies so that the school can fulfil its responsibility and follow the procedures identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## Guidelines

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 who has suffered from:

- physical injury: actual or likely injury - failure to prevent injury
- physical neglect: persistent or severe neglect by adults
- failure to be protected from exposure to any danger
- extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive
- emotional abuse: actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse
- sexual abuse; actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be so dependent and/or developmentally immature that the person or persons who had parental responsibility, charge or care of the child, either caused or knowingly failed to prevent sexual exploitation

**Designated Member of Staff: Barbara Cormican (Deputy Head Teacher)**

If the designated member of staff is not in school the Head Teacher is the designated person.

## Recruitment

The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Business Manager and 1 governor will keep up to date with Safer-Recruitment training. In line with safer-recruitment practices, there will always be at least 1 fully trained person on every recruitment panel.

The Business Manager is responsible for keeping the single central record up to date in line with current legislation. This record will also contain a record of qualifications for each member of staff, which will be verified at the time of appointment. The school is preparing to register with the ISA.

As part of their induction all new members of staff will be given a hard copy of the up-to-date policy for child protection. Appropriate training will be given as soon as possible after the commencement of employment at the school.

Child protection training will be updated annually for every member of staff.

## Reporting Concerns

Any member of staff who:

- has a suspicion that a pupil is marked or bruised in a way that is not readily attributed to "normal" knocks and scrapes
- notes behaviours or actions in a pupil which give rise to suspicions that the pupil may have suffered abuse
- receives hints or a disclosure of any type of abuse from a pupil or from one of his/her friends.

has a duty to report his or her concerns, as soon as possible, to the designated member of staff for child protection, or, in his or her absence, to the Head teacher.

In the first instance, this should be done verbally. However, as in all cases where referral to outside agencies is a possibility, accurate written records are vital. **An INCIDENT CONCERN SLIP** should be used to follow up any concern. **It is important that members of staff should not investigate or follow up suspicions of child abuse themselves, for instance by speaking with and/or questioning pupils or parents.**

It is the responsibility of the designated member of staff together with the Headteacher, to make an informed decision as to whether to refer the case to Social Services. This may be immediately following the expression of concern or after discussion with the pupil, his/her parents or carers, the member of staff, other staff, and other agencies as appropriate. While staff must be circumspect about using "hearsay" evidence, it must not be discounted without thought. Gossip is often, but not always, untrue. Such evidence may, together with other indicators, give us warning of an abusive situation. Again, record keeping of all concerns is the key.

It is the responsibility of the designated member of staff, together with the Headteacher, to notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the Child Protection Register.

It is the responsibility of the designated member of staff, together with the Headteacher to ensure that when a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves the school, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and the child's Social Worker is informed.

All records must be kept securely, separate from the main Pupil File, and in locked locations.

All Incident concern slips and all other hand-written notes must be kept and stored in child protection files. The named person will ensure that, where appropriate, handwritten notes are accurately typed up to form a continuous log. Full names of any individuals involved must be always be used for clarity.

## Child Abuse Allegations Made Against Staff

A child protection allegation made against a member of staff (including the designated teacher for child protection) is the responsibility of the Headteacher and not the designated teacher for child protection. All such concerns should be accurately recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible. **As stated earlier, the member of staff should undertake no further investigative action.**

A child protection allegation made against the Headteacher should be accurately and promptly recorded and referred on to the Chair of Governors. From thereon the LA, together with Social Services, will investigate the allegation.

## Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour and Sexual Harassment

For school staff, identifying inappropriate sexual behaviour can be a complex task. Children and adolescents are normally sexually curious and may behave inappropriately with each other - the boundary between sexual harassment and sexually abusive behaviour can be difficult to define.

Indicators of sexually abusive behaviour include:

- a significant age difference (4+ years) between children involved in sexual behaviour. An adolescent who seemed interested in younger children would give rise to concern
- sexual behaviour involving bribery, threats or force. Children without the intellectual or physical resources to resist abuse are particularly vulnerable.
- a level of sexual knowledge inconsistent with what would normally be expected
- sexually intrusive/aggressive behaviour - poking objects or parts of bodies into their orifices.

Defining behaviour as sexual harassment is difficult and a major issue is likely to be whether the sexual contact is consensual or not. A boy groping a girl may be an incident of inept behaviour by an immature adolescent; it may indicate that the person has the potential to become a sexual offender; it may indicate that they themselves are a victim of abuse. In all cases, it is essential that these incidents are treated seriously.

Details must be recorded accurately and passed on to the appropriate person. The needs of the victim must be addressed, in addition to ensuring that the perpetrator is dealt with in such a way that they realise the seriousness of their behaviour. Parents of both children should be contacted to give them an opportunity to support their child. It must be remembered that a criminal offence may have been committed and the parents of the victim have the right to pursue a complaint against someone who has assaulted their son/daughter. It must also be remembered that one or both parents/carers or a close relative may be the perpetrators.

#### **Some Common Signs of Abuse (Please see appendix for more comprehensive list)**

- unwillingness to come to school;
- complaining about missing possessions;
- unexplained bruising or time repeated bruising;
- easily distressed and frightened;
- odd drawing and sexually explicit language;
- damaged or incomplete work.
- a tendency to seem withdrawn or unusually quiet

#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed **annually** with the relevant staff and agencies.

Appendix 1: Background and Guidance

## **APPENDIX 1:**

# **BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE TO CHILD PROTECTION**

### **Introduction**

The Children Act 1989 gave every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquires made to safeguard his or her welfare.

Governing Bodies of all maintained schools have a responsibility for drawing up child protection procedures. However, the Headteacher, or another senior member of teaching staff, and a governor, should have designated responsibility for child protection. This may be the Deputy Headteacher in a primary school or one of the senior pastoral staff or Deputy Headteachers in a secondary school. The teachers carrying this responsibility should co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with agencies such as the Social Services Department and the Area Child Protection Committee. Both these bodies should have agreed local procedures for dealing with cases of suspected or alleged abuse. Reports and Circulars from the DCSF give guidance to governors, headteachers and teachers with designated responsibility for child abuse.

### **Child Protection Procedures**

All schools should have procedures for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, but the responsibility for investigating such cases lies with other agencies.

Headteachers need to:

- put in place procedures for handling cases of suspected abuse (including allegations against teachers) which are consistent with those agreed by the local Area Child Protection Committee and easily available to all staff for reference
- appoint a designated member of staff to co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with other agencies on suspected abuse cases
- make certain that the designated member of staff receives appropriate training and support and ensure that all staff are alert to signs of possible abuse and know to whom to report any concerns or suspicions
- make parents aware of the school's child protection policy.

### **Action**

In all cases where abuse is suspected or a sustainable allegation is made, teachers and other members of staff should report the information to the designated teacher. The designated teacher should refer these cases to, or discuss them with, the investigating agencies according to the procedures established by the local Area Child Protection Committee and by the LA.

If the designated teacher is unsure about whether a case should be formally referred or has a general concern about a child's health or development, he or she can seek advice and support from the local social services department, the NSPCC or the LA's Child Protection Co-ordinator. The Education Welfare Officer may also be able to offer advice.

Whether or not to make a referral that could activate a child protection investigation is a serious decision and will require careful judgement. Where the designated teacher is not the headteacher, they should agree the way in which the designated teacher will keep the headteacher informed of a case.

When referring a case of suspected or alleged abuse, the designated teacher should ask to be informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between the statutory agencies which will decide whether and how to investigate. The designated teacher may wish to clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom, the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made, bearing in mind that the abuser is frequently known to the child and may be a close relative.

A member of staff, either the designated teacher or the member of staff who knows the child best, should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion by using the school's knowledge of the child.

### **Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher has specific responsibility for the co-ordination of child protection procedures within the school and for liaison with social services and other agencies.

All staff need to be made aware who the designated teacher is as all cases of suspected abuse should be reported to him or her in the first instance.

The designated teacher needs to have appropriate training and should know:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral;
- the local Area Child Protection Committee and/or LA procedures and the designated teacher's role within them;
- the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them;
- the requirements of record keeping;
- the conduct of a child protection conference and how the designated teacher, or another member of staff, can make an appropriate contribution to it.

### **The Level of Child Abuse**

The incidence of child abuse is much higher than many teachers and support staff imagine, and is frequently at the hands of a person known to the child. There are several types of abuse - mental, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, all of which can form the basis of bullying. What needs to be remembered is that a high percentage of bullies have themselves been abused so that history is repeating itself.

### **Symptoms of Abuse**

Signs of physical abuse include:

- Injuries that are not adequately explained by the pupil.
- Current bruising injury, with a long history of bruises and accidents.
- Injuries getting progressively worse, or occurring in a time pattern (e.g. every Tuesday morning or after visits to relatives).
- 'Grip' marks on arms (may indicate severe shaking) or 'slap' markings (especially cheeks, buttocks, arms or legs).
- Long marks which could be from a belt or cane.
- Stub marks that might be from a cigarette.
- Bruising on both sides of the ear. Any 'symmetrical' bruising is suspicious.
- Teeth marks from a bite.
- Scalding to both soles of the feet.
- Bruised eyes, especially if both at once. (A doctor or the school nurse can usually tell whether the bruised eye is spread-bruising from an accidental bump to the nose or more likely to have been a fist to the eye).
- Constant attention seeking; over-pleasing/compliant behaviour, 'frozen watchfulness'.
- Running away.
- Kept away from school medical inspections and check-ups.
- Reluctant to go home after school.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance.
- Displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age.
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance.
- Tendency to cry easily.
- Regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby.
- Complaints of genital itching or pain or publicly playing with themselves.
- Distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, a baby-sitter or lodger.
- Unexplained gifts or money.
- Depression and withdrawal.
- Apparent secrecy.
- Wetting, day or night.
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares.
- Chronic illnesses, especially throat infections and venereal disease.
- Anorexia or bulimia.
- Self-mutilation, attempted suicide, frequently running away.
- Unexplained pregnancy.
- Fear of undressing for gym.
- Phobias or panic attacks.

Signs of emotional abuse include:

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags.

- Admission of punishment that appears excessive.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Continual self-deprecation.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Fear of new situations.
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb sucking).
- Self-mutilation.
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Drug/solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging.

Signs of neglect include:

- Looks extra thin and poorly.
- Well below average in height and weight; 'failing to thrive'.
- Complains of hunger, lacking energy.
- An untreated condition or injury.
- Has repeated accidents especially burns.
- Left alone at home inappropriately.
- Repeatedly unwashed or smelly.
- Kept away from school check-ups.
- Reluctant to go home.

This is not an exhaustive list and some symptoms are indicative of all the different forms of abuse.

#### **Other Relevant Policies and Procedures**

1. PSHCE/ Sex and relationship education policy
2. Behaviour policy
3. Homework policy
4. Drugs education policy
5. Attendance policy
6. Acceptable Use of ICT
7. Missing and Uncollected Children
8. Supervision
9. Safe access to School
10. Administration of Medicines
11. First Aid