

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Principle

The Government Green Paper *Every Child Matters* 2003 identified the importance of children and young people receiving support in order to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve through learning
- make a positive contribution to society
- achieve economic well-being

The protection and safeguarding of children and young people requires that:

- risks to children's welfare are minimised
- school takes action to address concerns where they arise
- school works to agree policies and procedures
- school works in partnership with the appropriate local agencies

Consequently the purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to provide clear direction to all staff in the event of child protection concerns, so that referrals may be handled sensitively and professionally, supporting the needs of the child.

Statutory basis

The policy is based on the requirements of *Working Together under the Children Act 1989*, later replaced by *Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999* this states that:-

Schools have a role in preventing abuse not only by adopting sound policies and procedures on the management of situations where there is suspected abuse but also through the curriculum. They can help pupils and students to acquire relevant information, skills and attitudes both to resist abuse in their own lives and to prepare them for the responsibilities of their adult lives, including parenthood.

Aims

1. To enable staff to identify child abuse and to understand how it should be dealt with within the context of School.
2. To establish a curricular base for pupils.
3. To identify training needs.

Child Abuse

Working Together under the Children Act defines the following categories of abuse:

Neglect

Physical Injury

Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse

- where these cause 'significant harm'
- to a child under eighteen years of age
- by a person who has a position of trust or authority
- or another child
- by direct action or neglect

Signs of Abuse

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- The pupils says she/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference.
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries.
- The pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the pupil's behaviour.
- The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
- The pupil's development is delayed.
- The pupil loses or gains weight.
- The pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed.
- The pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.

Child Protection

Child Protection should aim:

- to promote the protection of children from harm or ill treatment;
- to support the development of children to their full potential - intellectual, physical, social, emotional and behavioural;
- to foster self esteem, security, confidence and independence

within the framework that the child's welfare is paramount and that the child's wishes and feelings (in the light of their age and understanding) have been ascertained and considered.

Management in Cases of Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

The School will designate a member of staff who will have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the School and liaising with the appropriate agencies. The designated person will undertake regular training in association with the Local Safeguarding Children Board LSCB, formerly the Area Child Protection Committee ACPC. Currently the designated person is Mrs B Large and she will act in consultation with the Head Teacher.

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse must not investigate it beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation. In particular, the member of staff:

- Must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality and explain the need to pass the information to the Designated Officer who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation, that a complaint has been made, and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Officer.

In all cases where teachers or other members of staff consider that they have good cause to suspect abuse (including neglect and emotional ill treatment) the following action must be taken:

1. The member of staff should immediately report their suspicions to the Head Teacher or the designated member of staff.
2. If, after discussion, it is decided that the possibility of abuse can be ruled out, these suspicions should be recorded.
3. If, after discussion, it is agreed that grounds for suspicion do exist, the Head Teacher / designated teacher should telephone the area office of the social services (in the area where the child lives) to report their suspicions. A note should be made of the name of the person taking the referral and the time it was made. A record should be kept of the action taken, the interviews and the telephone conversation. **No contact should be made with the parents or guardians of the child.**

N.B. It remains the responsibility of the person to whom the abuse is disclosed, or who has grounds for suspecting abuse, to report these suspicions. In the event of a disagreement with the Head Teacher / designated teacher, this person still has the responsibility to report the suspicions to the Social Services. The Head Teacher / designated teacher should be informed in writing of any action taken.

4. The teacher to whom the abuse was disclosed, or who had grounds for suspicion, should, where possible, be present at the Child Protection conference.

Allegations Against Staff

In the case of allegations of child abuse concerning staff or volunteers, a decision will be taken by the Head Teacher following the guidance in the Employment Manual. The employee / volunteer

may be asked to take leave of absence pending the outcome of investigation. If the allegation involves the Head Teacher the Chair of the Governors makes this decision.