

# Child Protection Policy

## Definition

Because of their day to day contact with individual children, teachers and other staff in the education service are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.

Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities. Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, excessive dependence or attention seeking, may be noticeable.

Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity or withdrawal.

These signs and others can do no more than give rise to suspicion - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred, but teachers should be alert to all such signs.

The appointment of a designated teacher with specific responsibility for child protection should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed, including those in cases where an accusation is made against a member of the school's staff.

## Aim

Our aim is for all staff to be aware of child protection issues, to recognise symptoms and to carry out the correct procedure. The welfare of the child is paramount.

## Procedures

The Headteacher is the designated member of staff, Child Protection Officer (CPO) responsible for co-ordinating action within the School and liaison with other agencies. In his absence the Deputy Headteacher will take on this role.

Any concerns a member of staff may have about a child in their care should be discussed with the Child Protection Officer (CPO). The school will follow the procedures laid down in the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures booklet which is kept in the Headteacher's office.

The CPO will report to the governing body, as necessary. The governing body has appointed a key governor who will have special responsibility for linking with the CPO and supporting this role. The current key governor is Mr. Jon Underwood.

## **The Role of the Child Protection Officer**

After a member of staff reports a case of suspected abuse or a sustainable allegation the CPO will decide on the appropriate action to be taken:

### **Emergency Situation**

- Telephone Social Services and ask for the duty officer stating that it is a Child Protection issue. CPO to record date, time and name of duty officer.
- Call Police if SSD cannot respond urgently.

### **Non-Emergency Situation**

- Record and file all relevant notes, including Teachers Notes.
- If CPO is unsure of whether to act or not he may telephone the Child Protection Team Leaders at Social Services and ask if the child is known to them and seek advice or phone 01392 385980, or Gillian Feeste, LEA Co-ordinator for PSHE 01392-385254.
- Telephone Social Services and ask if the child is known to them and seek advice.
- If a member of staff has reported a case that involves a child already on the Child Protection Register the CPO should refer the case to, or discuss it with, the investigating agencies. If the CPO is unsure about whether a case should formally be referred, he can seek advice from the local social services department or the LEA's child protection coordinator.

### **Records**

Child protection records are kept in the Head teacher's office and are exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984. All records, teachers' original notes and CPO notes are to be kept.

### **Distribution of Information**

The School should be notified by Social Services when a child on the Child Protection Register starts School or if a pupil's name has been placed on the Register.

It is the responsibility of the GPO to ensure that class teachers are aware of the names of children on the Child Protection Register in their care and to pass this information on to the child's next school should that be necessary.

## **The Role of Staff - Teaching and Non-Teaching**

If a child makes a disclosure, staff **must not** ask any leading questions or attempt to investigate. The chief task is to listen and make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher.

The note should record the time, date, place, people who were present as well as what was said. Where possible this should be verbatim.

**Staff SHOULD NEVER PROMISE CHILD CONFIDENTIALITY.**

Staff have a responsibility to share information.

Legally, information must be passed on to the designated Child Protection Officer.

## **Dealing with Parents**

The School recognises that this can be a sensitive and difficult issue. Where possible, we will respect parents and children's needs for privacy and confidentiality and will endeavour to discourage gossip. We recognise that this can be a traumatic time for the non-abusing parent and would endeavour to give him or her privacy and support.

If, following the CPO's reporting of an incident the parents of the child concerned come to school to challenge our action, we will where possible soothe and calm parents pointing out that we have a legal responsibility to inform the relevant agencies and that the case is now out of our hands. Should the parents become aggressive either verbally or physically, we would ask them to leave and suggest that they make a more appropriate appointment.

## **Support**

### **For the Child Protection Officer**

It is recognised that the role of the CPO brings heavy practical and emotional burdens and support for this may be necessary. Where possible the CPO will be allocated time for liaison with inter-agency services, the preparation of case conferences and record keeping.

### **For the School Staff**

Regular training and opportunities to discuss issues relating to Child Protection will be provided within our INSET programme and through our staff meetings.

### **For the child**

At School we recognise that children who need help often choose to confide in someone at School with whom they feel comfortable. If a member of staff is approached they will endeavour to find an appropriate place for a personal conversation. The Child will be treated with sensitivity and understanding. If a teacher is dealing with a distressed child, arrangements will be made to cover the class. Through the curriculum we endeavour to equip children with the skills they may need to help them stay safe. As part of our Health

Education Policy we address issues such as:

Who do we trust?

What is a good secret?

What is a bad secret?

Whom should I tell?

**Resources available:**

Health for Life Book 1

Health for Life Book 2

You, Me Us File

Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures

**Monitoring:**

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body. The key governor will monitor the work of the CPO and ensure that all staff and governors receive appropriate training.