

POLICY STATEMENT : CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES; SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN

RATIONALE

- To inform all staff about their duties as an employee of the Education Authority since the implementation of the Statutory Procedures in the CHILDREN'S ACT (1989), Circular (10/95) Protecting Children from abuse , working together to safeguard children D of H, DfES and Home office (6/2003) NSPCC Child Protection (5/2002). The Children's Act (2002), The Human Rights Act 1998 and The Data Protection Act 1998, Every Child Matters (2003), What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, D of H (2003), Safeguarding Children in Education, DfES (2004).
- The legislation states that it is the duty of every local Education Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their care.
- The Department for Children and Young Persons is obliged to assist Social Services Departments in their investigations regarding child abuse and SSD have to consult with the Education Authority if they discover matters connected with child's education which needs to be investigated.
- To meet the outcomes of Every Child Matters. In particular this policy supports the outcomes highlighted below:

Be Healthy

Stay Safe

Enjoy and Achieve

Make a positive contribution

Achieve economic well-being

PURPOSES

- To protect children as child abuse is a criminal act and an adult's first duty is the PROTECTION OF THE CHILD, as the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Schools therefore have a pastoral responsibility they should maintain and promote pupil welfare ie health, happiness, prosperity and well being.
- Schools must have guidelines and open channels of communication for pupils to seek support, without stigma, and with the appropriate confidentiality.
- To protect and inform staff, both teaching and non-teaching, about the current legislation.

GUIDELINES

- The designated Assistant Head (Student Support) and Assistant Head (Director of Upper School) provides training for **all** staff particularly new staff and NQTs, annually.
- All staff, including support and voluntary, undergo CRB checks.*

- If teachers, LSAs, lunchbreak supervisors etc observe outward signs of abuse, sudden changes in behaviour, failure to develop etc. they should report this to their Line Manager.
- Signs and symptoms may vary but a useful checklist can include:-
 - Physical problems – unexplained injuries, unusual or non accidental injuries, covering up their bodies, flinching if touched, burns, scalds, bruising which shows hand marks etc
 - Behaviour problems – aggressive, withdrawn, severe mood swings, temper loss ie behaviour which sets them apart from their peers.
 - Educational problems – difficulty with concentration, underachievement.
 - Mental health – depression, mood swings which are set out of character.
 - Relationship difficulties – inappropriate, age related behaviour eg touching others or themselves, lack of friends, excessive need for approval or defence.
 - Hygiene/health problems – smelly, unkempt, emaciated, failure to thrive, anorexia/bulimia, stealing food, tiredness, poor attendance, pain, itching + STIs.
 - Suicide or self harm – extreme cases death
 - Drug and alcohol problems – functioning beyond their age level.
- Some helpful hints when taking a statement from a pupil who has made an allegation:-

Do:

 - Take what the child says seriously
 - Listen to the child carefully and without interruption or prompting
 - Remain calm and don't rush into action that may be inappropriate
 - Reassure them they are not to blame
 - If you are in a group situation with the child, arrange to see them on their own at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - If they are in immediate danger or need emergency medical care, make sure the relevant emergency service is contacted (via Designated Child Protection Teacher/Assistant Head (Student Support), Assistant Head (Director of Upper School)).
 - Let them know what you are going to do to help
 - Report what you have been told to the designated teacher as soon as possible (or to a senior member of staff in their absence). This must always be on the same day
 - Record what was said and who was present. Use the child's exact words wherever possible.
 - Concerns about abuse must always be **recorded, signed and dated**.

Don't:

 - Allowing your shock or distaste to show
 - Probing for more information than is offered
 - Speculations or assumptions
 - Making negative comments about the alleged abuser
 - Promising things that you cannot keep, such as that "everything will be alright"
 - Agreeing to keep the information a secret
 - Delaying emergency action to protect a child
 - Expressing disbelief in what the child is saying
 - Trying to investigate or question the child, except to clarify what you have heard. This is particularly important in cases of sexual abuse.

NB Remember that it may be more difficult for some children to talk about what is happening to them. Some children who have experienced racism may find it difficult to trust adults from different ethnic backgrounds to their own. Disabled children too, will have to overcome additional barriers before being able to disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not have information about alternative sources of care or residence.

- The matter must be reported immediately to your LINE MANAGER.
- The Line Manager should report the alleged abuse/concerns to the DESIGNATED SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF, CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER, i.e Assistant Head (Student Support) or Assistant Head (Director of Upper School) who is responsible for contacting the SSD and other agencies in or to enact the appropriate procedures.
- The Designated Teacher is trained to “pass all calls through to the appropriate duty team without delay, having first recorded the name of the child, his or her address and the nature of the concern”. (Recommended from the Climbie Inquiry June 2003.)
- Occasionally Child Protection issues may be levelled at members of staff, in which case strict procedures must be followed by the DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER and/or HEAD TEACHER. (See Policy on Allegations of Professional Abuse). The basic criteria is based upon whether an allegation, if submitted, constitutes “significant harm”. Members of staff must therefore immediately **report in writing**, any incident they consider may give rise to any allegations of abuse, to their Line Managers. Such reports must be immediately passed onto a member of SMB, or ASSISTANT HEAD (STUDENT SUPPORT), ASSISTANT HEAD (DIRECTOR OF UPPER SCHOOL)/CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER.
- All referrals require Social Services Department to be informed immediately plus a written report and a completed CA 10 form to follow the referral, copies of both are sent to the Principal Education Welfare Officer (usually within 24 hours, maximum 48 hours.)
- The Duty Social Worker (or family Social Worker) will then take charge of the inquiry/investigation. This may mean the child not being allowed home, fostering, medicals, arrests etc. This is all done by the Social Services Department and not the school. However school may have to take the decision not to send the child into a situation of danger until a Social Worker and/or Doctor arrives. A medical may be essential as well as Police photography/statements. The abuser is likely to be arrested; all these factors need to be delicately and efficiently managed/co-ordinated by the DESIGNATED DEPUTY HEAD/CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER in conjunction with SSD.
- Thereafter, the school is invited to any Case Conference and the ASSISTANT HEAD (STUDENT SUPPORT), ASSISTANT HEAD (DIRECTOR OF UPPER SCHOOL)/CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER will attend or if that is impossible, the relevant YEAR HEAD or person appointed by the CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER. A written report is usually also required on forms CA5 and CA6.
- The school is informed of any outcomes from the Case Conference e.g. whether the child is placed on the CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER, child’s legal status, etc. The school will thereafter monitor the child’s progress. The DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER/ASSISTANT HEAD (STUDENT SUPPORT), ASSISTANT HEAD (DIRECTOR OF

UPPER SCHOOL) will inform Social Services Department Case Co-ordinator of any concerns.

- Parents have the right to be present at Case Conferences with a 'friend' and have the right to complain if they consider the procedures have not been adhered to by the professionals involved. This brings into play the issue of compensation under the criminal injuries scheme.
- Schools are required to send on the complete school record if a child has to change schools, the receiving school must know if the child is at risk or on the REGISTER.
- Both the formal and informal curriculum, particularly in PSHE, can help children raise their self-esteem and acquire relevant skills and attitudes in relation to family life, parenthood, sex and personal safety education.
- The categories of child abuse have been reduced to FOUR and there is no longer a category for "grave concern". The four remaining categories indicate **significant** harm in terms of:-

Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect, in fact children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse. In almost all cases the abuser is someone known to and trusted by the child

Physical

- Physical abuse involves injury eg hitting, shaking, squeezing, punching, kicking, knocking down, choking, burning, scalding, biting, suffocating, or attempting to drown.
- Physical harm involves giving the child alcohol or inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Physical safety means failure to protect from injury or suffering eg no fireguard.

Sexual

- Enticing or forcing a child to engage in fondling, masturbation, oral or anal intercourse.
- Making a child observe inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Showing a child pornography and engaging them in inappropriate discussions.

Emotional – often goes alongside other forms of abuse

- Persistent or severe ill treatment eg rejection that is likely to have a serious effect on the child's development eg withholding love and affection.
- Constantly shouting, threatening or demeaning the child.
- Persistent over protection such that the child cannot mix with others.
- Racial or other forms of harassment designed to undermine self esteem (See Racial Policy.)
- Regular humiliation threatening to send them away from home or telling them their parents wish they were never born.

Neglect

- Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs eg inadequate diet or dress, denial of health care
- Leaving the child unsupervised at home or elsewhere.

NB **Bullying** (see separate policy) is deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time and can be physical, verbal, emotional etc but it is not recognised formally as a category of abuse.

CONCLUSION

These procedures are statutory and are primarily designed to protect children from abuse as well as Education Authority's employees from possible litigation.

It is essential that the procedures, therefore, are known and carried out by **all school staff**.

*In instances of allegations being made against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors acts for the School.

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