

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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 practise 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.
- Ensure that children and young people feel safe and secure at school.

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 develop 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 21CL curriculum for pupils to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Learners of all ages should be encouraged to talk in general terms about how they are and how they feel. Any learner expressing unhappiness or worry should be offered an opportunity to talk about this individually with a staff member. Children must always be listened to carefully and concerns that children raise should be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

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 to deal with the disclosure of abuse. All staff members 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.

Reporting concerns

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral will be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

Under rather less immediate circumstances, 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 Safeguarding Lead for child protection, Helen O'Sullivan, or on her absence, the Deputy DSL Robin Shaw, or, in his absence, to the Headteacher.

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. 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 safeguarding lead, together with the headteacher, to make an informed decision as to whether to refer the case to social services, through the SPA, following RBK's LSCB procedures. This may be immediately following the expression of concern or after discussion with the pupil, his 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. It is an essential requirement for all members of staff to record any conversation or contact that might be useful as evidence.

We also have a designated specifically trained teacher, Elizabeth Barrett, whose role is to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after. She works in close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead as well as the LA virtual school headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead, 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 safeguarding lead, 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.

Staff behaviour

The highest possible standards of behaviour are expected from staff, governors and volunteers. In particular, staff should be on their guard against:

- Treating pupils or students as peers by adopting their mannerisms or slang.
- Giving inappropriate details to students of their personal lives.
- Seeming to favour particular students.
- Using physical contact with students that is secretive or of a nature that could be considered indecent.
- Not following school policy on searching students.
- Using emotional abuse against children by ignoring, ridiculing, humiliating, harassing, intimidating, bullying or continentally singling out any child for negative attention.
- Dressing inappropriately.
- Failing to report concerns.

Child abuse allegations made against staff

The school has procedures in place to handle allegations made against members of staff and volunteers.

A child protection allegation made against a member of staff (including the designated safeguarding lead) is the responsibility of the headteacher and not the designated safeguarding lead 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. Such allegations should be referred to the LADO.

A child protection allegation made against the headteacher should be accurately and promptly recorded and referred on to the chair of governors who will, if necessary, obtain guidance from the DFE or RBK.

There are also procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.

Safer recruitment

The governing body takes every precaution to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children. This is achieved by:

- Adhering to the statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children. In the case of a new appointment, the school follows the safer recruitment procedure required by government guidance. DBS checks on all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, temporary, supply or salaried trainees are in place and details are held on a single central record.
- Taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.
- Ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised.

The school has written recruitment, selection and appointment procedures in place. There is always one person on any appointment panel who has undertaken safer recruitment training.

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 seems 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

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.

Children are capable of abusing their peers; peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. . Abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Details must be recorded accurately and passed on to the appropriate person, the DSL. 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.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (June 2015) legally requires schools to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (the Prevent Duty).

School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation, and general safeguarding principles apply to keeping children safe.

It is the responsibility of the DSL together with the Headteacher, to make an informed decision as to whether to make a referral to the Channel programme within the LA.

Some common signs of abuse

- 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.

Safety on and off site

The safety of children inside school, moving around, arriving and leaving the school/academy site are important considerations. Arrangements for this are set out in our health and safety policy.

Risk assessments must be completed and approved before any trips away from the site are undertaken.

Children should be offered facilities for changing (and if needed for showering) that offer them the level of privacy and safety appropriate to their age.

Internet

The school has procedures in place to safeguard all learners from unlawful, sexual or otherwise potentially harmful content on the internet. Information on internet safety and the importance of monitoring internet use at home is made available to all parents annually.

Parents and carers

All parents and carers should be made aware of this policy and the duties and responsibilities of the school with regard to safeguarding and child protection. Parents must always be made to feel welcomed and encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their child at home

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually with the relevant staff and agencies. The chair of governors will be appraised of incidents.

June 2017