



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**Date of policy:** November 2011

**Responsibility:** Child protection officer

**Date of review:** November 2012

### **1 RATIONALE**

Whilst South Gloucestershire take the lead in Child Protection matters, the school and teachers have a very important role to play because of their regular contact with children, their knowledge of individual children and their understanding of child development. We firmly believe that in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child, the complexity and sensitivity that surrounds factors such as the child's development needs, the parenting capacity of the child's parents and family and environmental factors need to be taken into account. Everyone working in school has a "duty of care" and regular training and discussion are vital if we are to be effective in managing Child Protection within our school.

### **2 AIMS**

It is our aim that all staff in the school community and in particular the designated child protection teacher and senior staff should be familiar with the legal framework and agreed procedures set down in this policy

### **3 GUIDELINES**

- We strive to provide an environment within our school in which every child is valued as a member of the community.
- Create the space so that children can be listened to and articulate their wishes and feelings.
- Allow a variety of opportunities for class and group discussions of thoughts and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance and tolerance.
- Integrate the key concepts of Child Protection (secrets, touch, trust, self-esteem, feelings and emotions, assertiveness) with the existing curriculum particularly personal, social, health and moral education. This should allow the children to acquire the skills and attitudes to resist abuse and to prepare them for responsibility.
- Ensure there is awareness by all staff of the Child Protection procedures at the beginning of the autumn term.
- All staff and students will be helped with levels of knowledge, skills and awareness in the recognition of potential or actual abuse and the handling of a direct disclosure.
- A clear system of communication will exist. The Assistant Head is the named Child Protection member of staff. Staff should immediately inform her if there is a concern.

- Children considered by the staff concerned to be potentially at risk will be monitored carefully for a set period. Carefully written records will be kept and shared with the appropriate staff. Such records will be handed on each year and, where appropriate, to the receiving school.
- When a child is being monitored, staff involved will meet regularly to discuss the situation.
- Child protection records are confidential and will be kept in the Head teachers office, but with access to staff directly concerned. Parents/carers do not have a right to information contained in records which relate to child abuse (Education (Schools Records) Regulations, 1989 [Reference 1]). However, all factual information will be required in any subsequent case conference or court proceedings.
- Children who have made a disclosure will be given ongoing support, as will staff who deal with such cases.
- New members of staff will be expected to make themselves familiar with the correct procedures.
- Staff will be aware of how to handle a disclosure of abuse where a member of the teaching or non-teaching staff of the Head Teacher is implicated as the abuser.

## **4 PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 The Child Protection Policy should be understood and implemented by all staff.**

4.2 Where child abuse is suspected or alleged within the school, the staff member will immediately inform the named Child Protection member of staff, Elizabeth Rogers, Assistant Headteacher. The named Child Protection member of staff will consult with the Head teacher on all child protection matters; the details of any concern or allegation will be shared, and a decision about referral on to Children Social Services (or to another agency, such as Education Welfare or Psychology if this is more appropriate) will be made.

4.3 Where the allegation or concern relates to the actions of a member of staff, the matter should immediately be referred to the Head teacher, who will immediately refer to the Head of Personnel, Children and Young Peoples Department.

4.4 If the matter involves the Head teacher, then referral should be made to the Deputy Head who will contact the Head of Personnel, Children and Young Peoples Department.

### **4.5 Children need to be made aware that any disclosure will remain confidential but information will be passed on to relevant personnel.**

4.6 The information should be collated the same day that the concern is identified and will include any previous concerns about the child, plus any services which are known to be currently involved. The information is stored on a secure drive, or if a paper copy is used it is kept in the ECM folder in the Head teacher's office.

4.7 *It is inappropriate to interview the child about the injury or concern*, but it is appropriate for the teacher, or staff member to whom the child has disclosed, to clarify with the child what has happened to them.

4.8 The exact words used by the child, including the context of any allegation or outcome of any discussion with the child, should be noted.

4.9 Parents should be advised of the intention to refer to Social Services, and their views and co-operation sought, unless there is reason to believe that doing so may place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

4.10 When a referral is made to the relevant Children Social Services team the immediate next steps should be decided by Children Social Services after consultation with the Head teacher (e.g. should the child be allowed to go home at the end of the day? Should the school contact parents if this has not already been done?) *School staff have a statutory duty to co-operate with social workers who are managing a Child Protection investigation.*

4.11 Any referrals should be made as early in the day as possible, to allow for the most effective planning for the child. Where there is an injury, the referral must be made on the same day that the injury is noted.

4.12 School staff should keep appropriate records and be prepared to attend strategy meeting and case conferences as required. Confidentiality must be observed and written records kept in secure conditions.

4.13 The school is likely to be represented on the core group of professionals who have the responsibility to follow up the case after a case conference, particularly if the child is made subject to a child protection plan.

4.14 The attendance and welfare of pupils for whom there is a child protection plan must be closely monitored. All staff concerned should be aware that the child is subject to a child protection plan. If the pupil moves school records should be sent on promptly, and the Education Welfare Service should be informed immediately.

4.15 It is always appropriate to discuss the situation with the relevant local authority staff. Children Social Services staff will decide, in consultation with school staff and other professionals, whether the child is at risk of significant harm. In this case the matter will be dealt with according to Child Protection procedures. If this is not the case the matter may still result in Children Social Services involvement to support the family. Decisions about abuse involve the concept of "significant harm".

## **5 CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE**

These definitions of abuse are drawn from the Department of Health Publication, "Working Together to Safeguard Children", 2006 [Reference 3].

### **5.1 Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **5.2 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative sex (e.g. rape, buggery or oral) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **5.3 Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

Provide adequate food, shelter or clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment).

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

### **5.4 Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **6 LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO A YOUNG PERSON**

This section is taken from the CP Training Pack, Listening and Responding.

### **Do ...**

Be accessible and receptive.

Listen carefully and ask open questions to clarify (e.g. who, what, how).

Take it seriously (e.g. "this is very serious"; "I'm glad you told me"; "that was the right thing to do").

Reassure the child it was not their fault.

Prepare them for the fact that you must involve others, such as Social Services.

Explain that you cannot personally protect them – but will support them in telling the right people.

Report all suspicions or disclosures immediately.

Make careful records of what was said – using the child's own words and including questions you asked – keep your hand written notes which should be dated and signed.

## **Do Not ...**

Jump to conclusions.

Try to force the child to disclose – let the child talk, ask only the questions you need to know to clarify immediate safety. The child should not be repeatedly interviewed and the Police/Social Services interview will form the basis of evidence needed to protect the child.

Speculate or accuse anybody.

Ask any leading questions whatsoever, e.g. “was it daddy/mummy”, or any questions requiring a yes/no answer.

Make promises you cannot keep – it is important to remember that the child has chosen you, as a trusted adult, as a person to confide in. She or he will expect your support.

**Remember ...** It is the role of the Police and Social Services to investigate.

## **7 CONTACT DETAILS**

In school: Child protection member of staff, Elizabeth Rogers, Assistant headteacher

Additional support: Education welfare service 01454 863377

Kingswood duty team: 01454 868520

[www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

