

Child Protection / Safeguarding Children

Context

With effect from 1 June 2004, S175 of the 2002 Education Act, places a duty on LAs and governing bodies of schools 'to make arrangements for carrying out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children'. In so doing both LAs and schools are expected to have regard to any advice issued by the Secretary of State.

The framework has drawn heavily on the DfE consultation document 'Safeguarding Children' and LA Model Child Protection Policy.

Purpose

This policy reflects our active commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of students at our school. We believe that children have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. Therefore we aim to provide a secure, caring environment and a curriculum which nurtures self-esteem and empowers children to protect themselves.

We aim to ensure that children who are vulnerable, whether they be Looked After, at risk, in need, have witnessed domestic violence, or have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm, are identified and appropriate action is taken to keep them safe. The school has, and will continue to develop, a systematic approach towards identification and referral of suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. We recognise that abuse may be sexual, physical, emotional, or neglect. We further recognise that students may put themselves at risk of harm.

Who/what was consulted in formulating the policy

In drawing up this policy we have considered the guidance from the LA,

which in turn has worked closely with Social Services and the Police.

Relationship to other school policies

This policy is cross-referenced to the following policies- behaviour and bullying, health and safety, home school agreement, recruitment and retention of staff, restraint of pupils, sex and relationship education and staff discipline.

Roles and responsibilities of the Head, other staff, governors

This policy applies to all staff working in the school. Any one of whom could be the first point of disclosure for a child.

Specifically the **governing body** will ensure that:

- The school has a Child Protection / Safeguarding Children policy that conforms to the LA and local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and is reviewed annually
- The policy includes provision for procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers and for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- The school maintains an up to date Single Central Register
- The school has a Deputy Head designated teacher to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and for ensuring students who have been abused are supported in accordance with agreed action plans
- The Governing Body has a named governor responsible for Child Protection, and Looked After Children, who has received appropriate training and information to carry out their responsibilities for child protection
- Any deficiencies in child protection arrangements are brought to the attention of the governing body and are remedied immediately

- A member of the governing body is nominated to be the person responsible for liaising with the LA and external agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher. The Lead Social Worker in the Education Department, to whom concerns should be addressed, is Andrea Nixon.

The **nominated governor**, where s/he is also the Chair of Governors will:

- Ensure that the school's safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed and reported on annually to the governing body.
- Oversee procedures and take action according to LA procedures, where there are allegations against the Head Teacher

When the nominated governor is not the Chair of Governors all allegations against the Head Teacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors and/or the LA lead Child Protection Officer.

The Head Teacher will:

- Appoint a designated teacher to be responsible for all safeguarding matters
- Make arrangements for this member of staff, and any other relevant staff, to be released to attend child protection conferences and training
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all applicants for positions in the school- paid and voluntary. This will include checking identity, qualifications, professional and character references, health and physical capacity, previous employment history to ensure gaps are accounted for, and enhanced criminal record checks every three years.
- Ensure that the school adopts safer recruitment practices and ensure

that appropriate questions are asked at every interview for a job working with UHS students or at the school

- Ensure that child protection procedures set out in this policy are followed by all staff
- Ensure that all staff [including temporary, supply and volunteers] and the governing body, know the name of the designated Deputy Head responsible for Child Protection and their role.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers have undertaken up to date training, including inter-agency working in the case of the designated teacher. This will include providing safeguarding training for all new staff, making them aware of signs of abuse and what to do.
- Have in place procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff in accordance with LA guidelines and ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of them
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and address such concerns sensitively and effectively
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for Citizenship which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know who to turn to for help
- Include in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life,

particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills

The **designated** teacher must:

- Have received training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case, together with a working knowledge of how to contribute effectively when required to, at local child protection conferences and other procedures and discussions
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding matters of child protection, including attendance at case conferences
- Access resources
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers recognise that s/he is a source of information, advice, support and expertise within the school
- Be responsible for co-ordinating referrals by liaising with Social Services and other agencies over cases of abuse and allegations of abuse
- Ensure that colleagues have had training in child protection and safeguarding relevant to their role and needs and know how to identify and report any concerns they have to the designated teacher immediately they arise
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands this child protection / safeguarding children policy
- Liaise with the Head Teacher to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations to ensure there is always cover for their role
- Work with the governing body to ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated annually
- Keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of referrals / concerns, using the safeguarding log sheets, even where there is no

requirement to make an immediate referral

- Ensure parents have access to the child protection / safeguarding children policy and are aware that referrals may be made by the school
- Ensure that all records are kept securely, separate from main school files, and in locked locations
- Ensure that when a child transfers to another school the next school receives his/her child protection / safeguarding file in time to make any necessary arrangements. Advise receiving school of the need for this file to be kept separate from main school file
- Archive files permanently when students leave school normally.

The **Senior Guidance Leader** has responsibility for ensuring good attendance and monitoring attendance data, in particular persistent absence. They will:

- Work with parents and students
- Liaise with Education Welfare and participate in Attendance Panels as required.
- Keep the Leadership Team informed of attendance issues

All school colleagues have a responsibility to protect children from abuse. Anyone made aware of or suspecting child abuse should take immediate action. Actual physical injury, verbal statements of actual physical, emotional or sexual abuse and evidence of neglect justify urgent referral to the senior designated teacher. They should respond to the child by:

- treating him/her with utmost sensitivity, doing nothing to damage the child further through

- thoughtlessness or carelessness in their reaction to the child's distress
- listening and recording as accurately as possible what the child says with dates and times
 - not probing or asking leading questions. It is the job of the police to investigate
 - not promising to keep secrets.

The information should be passed directly to the designated staff members and not left until the end of the day.

Parents and Carers need to be aware that should any member of staff suspect that a child might have been deliberately harmed or neglected by their parent, the School has a duty to inform the local Social Services Department and should be made aware of its obligations in the School prospectus.

It is then the duty of **Social Services** to decide on the best way of carrying out an investigation.

Where there are concerns, the School will complete a Common Assessment Form, irrespective of whether a referral is necessary to Social Services. The School may also convene a professionals' meeting which may be of a multi agency nature.

The **Police** have the right to speak to the child without parental consent when it is in the best interests of the child. They may do so on school premises or, as appropriate, in special premises where a video recording may be made. This is called an ABE interview and captures best evidence. However they cannot take a child off the school premises without the permission of the Head Teacher. When the police interview a child, a member of staff known to the child should provide appropriate support.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact.

The Head Teacher will report to the Education Committee annually on the implementation of the policy, identifying any necessary changes in approach which are deemed necessary.

Appendix to Child Protection / Safeguarding Children

Dealing with Cases of Suspected Child Abuse

The following guidelines comply with the procedures set out by the local Safeguarding Children's Board.

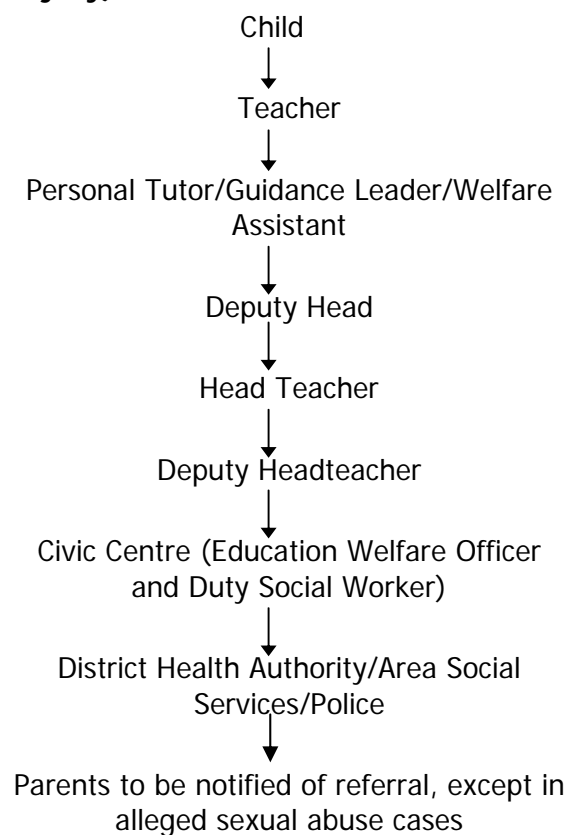
The Basic Precept

'If any situation arises where someone is concerned about the safety of a child, they should communicate immediately with the Duty Officer of the Social Services Department, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or the Police, whilst taking any appropriate steps to protect the child'.

The above procedure will be put in to action by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for child protection /safeguarding children following initial reference by any individual member of staff to the appropriate Tutor, Guidance Leader or Welfare Assistant. The designated Deputy Headteacher will inform the relevant external agencies as indicated below.

Once a disclosure of abuse has been made, or there are suspicions that abuse is taking place, it is essential that the child is not barraged with questions which could cause severe distress. There are 4 categories of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Any comments made by the child should be put in writing by the teacher to whom a disclosure has been made, as soon as possible *after* the interview with the child has been completed. This should be passed to the Deputy Head at the time of the referral. Individual teachers may not make referrals themselves. In the absence of the Deputy Head, referrals should be made to the Head Teacher.

ROUTE TAKEN FOLLOWING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE (Previously know as Non-Accidental Injury)



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Presentation of Injuries

Studies of non-accidental injury have shown that certain factors are frequently found; their presence in any given situation is not 'proof' that an injury was non-accidental, but may be an indication of the need for careful investigation. In particular:

the explanation given is not compatible with the injury, or the child is said to have behaved in a way that is inappropriate to its age and development, or several differing explanations are given. (N.B. the child, or other members of the family, may support the explanation however improbable);

a constant presentation of minor injuries may represent a 'cry for help' which, if ignored, may lead to more serious injury;

the family has attended clinics or surgeries unusually frequently, or has attended several different casualty departments with appropriate or inappropriate requests for attention;

consent for further medical investigation is refused;

a third party (e.g. another child is blamed for the injury);

the parents cannot be found or the adult with the child is drunk or violent;

there is a reluctance to give information or failure to mention previous injuries known to have occurred;

there is an unexplained delay in seeking treatment, or it is sought at an inappropriate time (e.g. late at night);

attention is sought for other problems unrelated to the injury, or the injury is not even mentioned.

Burns/Scalds

It can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns, but as a general rule of thumb, burns or scalds with clear outlines are suspicious as are burns of uniform depth over a larger area and splash marks above the main burn area (caused by hot liquid being thrown). Small round burns may be cigarette burns (but may be friction burns, and accidental, if along the bony protuberances of the spine).

Scars

All children have scars, but notice should be taken of an exceptionally large number of differing scars (especially if coupled with recent bruising), unusual shaped scars (e.g. round ones from possible cigarette burns), or of large scars that are from burns or lacerations that did not receive medical treatment.

Fractures

A fracture should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and discoloration over a bone or joint.

General Points

Some bruises and marks may seem insignificant by themselves but repeated injuries, even of a very minor nature, may be symptomatic of a family in crisis and, if no action is taken, the child may be more seriously hurt.

There are certain parental responses which are a cause for concern:

- a delay in seeking medical treatment obviously needed;
- an unawareness or denial of any injury;
- inappropriate or varying explanations of an injury;
- constant complaints about a child (realistic or unrealistic);
- over-hasty or violent reaction to a child's annoying behaviour, asking

for the child to be removed from home, or indicating difficulties in coping with a child, about whose care there are already doubts;

- unrealistic expectations of the child.

Neglect and Failure to Thrive

This requires medical diagnosis, but warning signs, apart from the child's obviously neglected appearance include:

- Diarrhoea
- Voracious appetite
- A child who thrives away from home
- Unresponsiveness in the child
- Staying frozen in one position for an unnaturally long time.

Sexual Abuse

This is now known to be more common than has been previously recognised.

Suspicion should be aroused by:-

- Injuries in the genital area
- Infections or abnormal discharge in the genital area
- Excessive sexual awareness or knowledge of sexual matters inappropriate for the child's age.
- Regular sexualised behaviour.

Any allegation by a child that he/she has been sexually exploited should be taken very seriously.

The safety of a child is of paramount importance and must over-ride all other considerations.

If you have reasonable cause for concern in any of the above areas act immediately.

Remember that the Guidance Leader or designated Deputy Headteacher should be the first point of contact.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Definitions of Child Abuse (These apply to all students under 17 years)

Physical Injury - Any form of physical injury, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, the injury was inflicted, or knowingly not prevented, by any person having custody of the child.

Neglect - The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health and development.

Emotional Ill-treatment - The severe adverse effect upon behaviour and emotional development caused either by persistent or severe neglect or rejection on the part of the parent or carer.

Sexual Abuse - The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, violate the social taboos of family roles, or which are against the law.

Potential Abuse - Where children are in situations where they have not been abused but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk that they might be abused in the future, including situations where another child in the household has been harmed, or the household contains a known abuser.

Self Harm: where children are putting themselves at risk through their behaviour. This could be alcohol or substance misuse, sexualised behaviour, harming themselves, regularly staying away from home without the knowledge or consent of their parents etc...

These categories of abuse are not

necessarily exhaustive nor are they mutually exclusive and all of them may result in a failure of the child to thrive. The term 'child abuse' in this guide is intended to cover all these categories. Professional staff need to consider systematically whether all or some of these categories of abuse are present, as well as the degree to which they are present, in the situation faced by each child in the household.

All cases of suspected physical injury should be reported immediately to the Deputy Head who should call upon the Senior Guidance Leader / Welfare Assistant to examine the injuries. Reference should then be made to the Deputy Head who will take the decision in conjunction with the Head Teacher, on the necessity for further action. A body map (available in the Welfare Suite) should be completed by the Welfare Assistant in all cases referred for further action and accurate notes taken of the explanation of the occurrence of the injury/injuries. Where possible photos should also be taken of bruising.

In all other cases of suspected abuse, staff should discuss their cause for concern with the Guidance Leader who must consult the appropriate Deputy Head.

IN ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED ABUSE THE SAFEGUARDING LOG SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE DEPUTY HEAD FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. SAFEGUARDING LOGS TO BE KEPT ELECTRONICALLY OR IN A FILE IN THE DEPUTY'S OFFICE.

It is recognised that children who are abused, or witness violence, may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour

may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The School will endeavour to support the student through:

- The content of the curriculum
- The School ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued.
- The School behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the school. The School will ensure that the students know that some behaviour is unacceptable, but they are valued and not to blame for any of the abuse that has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the student such as Social Services, Intensive Family Support Workers, Targetted Youth Support Team, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Education Welfare Service and Education Psychology Service.
- Ensuring that, when a student on the Child Protection Register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

All teaching staff will be made aware of the guidelines for dealing with child abuse. A summary can be found in the staff handbook.