

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children. We recognise that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care Services.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

PROCEDURES

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with national and Hampshire County Council procedures. We will ensure that:

We have a designated Senior Person, Mr Patrick Wilson, who undertakes regular training.

We have a member of staff who will act in the designated Senior Person's absence: Mrs Julie Teo.

A governor will have designated responsibility for Child Protection.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- Adhering to the national, Hampshire County Council and school procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse:
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to Social Services

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel **helpless and** humiliated. We recognise that a child may feel self blame.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We recognise that the Chaplain is in a unique position both in respect of communication with parents and possible discussion with students or disclosure from students.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggression or withdrawal.

OUR SCHOOL WILL SUPPORT ALL PUPILS BY:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-confidence whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- Notifying Social Care Services as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school.
- All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitudes or actions of colleagues.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential. The Headmaster or Designated Teacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

SUPPORTING STAFF

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become Involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the designated teacher and to seek further support as appropriate.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headmaster. The Headmaster on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the designated Governor for Child Protection.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headmaster, the allegation will be referred to the nominated Governor for Child Protection or the Chair of Governors.

The school will follow the Hampshire CC procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which will be readily available in the school.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

BULLYING

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

RACIST INCIDENTS

Repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

PREVENTION

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

We recognise that the Chaplain is in a unique position both in respect of communication with parents and possible discussion with students or disclosure from students.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Designated staff will be provided with regular updated child-protection training. Whole-staff INSET will be provided on a regular basis.

All staff will be issued with “**WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE WORRIED A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED – SUMMARY**”, issued by HM Government – non-statutory guidance: ‘**every child matters**’.

APPENDIX 1

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

Designated Senior Person: **MR PATRICK WILSON, HEADMASTER.**

Allegations of emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect are to be reported to the designated member of staff (Mr Patrick Wilson). When information is received regarding abuse by a member of staff or other adult then:

- Refer the matter immediately
- Questioning should be limited and should avoid leading questions
- Tell the child what is likely to happen next
- Ask the child what they wish to happen to ensure they are protected
- Make a written record as soon as possible, including, where relevant, a copy of any written statements by staff (and, in certain cases, by pupils). Remember that anything in writing may have to be produced in court.

See also guidance notes as to how to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse (Appendix 2).

A guarantee of confidentiality cannot be given to children.

Parents do not always have to be informed or consulted, especially in cases where a parent may be the perpetrator of any alleged abuse.

Do not attempt to investigate reports of abuse. Note: other parties, including staff and pupils, are only involved / consulted as part of an investigation by the designated member of staff (a) if they are likely to be able to clarify certain issues (b) need to be involved on a need to know basis.

The designated member of staff then:

- Takes steps to protect the child from harm
- Refers the matter to:

Social Care – Referral and Assessment. Hampshire Children’s Services – **0845 600 4555**

Advice may be gained from:

Hampshire Police: **0845 045 4545**

Department of Health: Guidance on Safeguarding Children

NSPCC **0800 800 5000**

Childline: **0800 1111**

In their report to the duty officer the designated member of staff must:

- Provide factual information only and not speculation.
- Make a record of the conversation including time/date/information given/name of Social Services contact.

ABUSE OF CHILDREN BY CHILDREN

- Listen to the child and ascertain the seriousness of the situation.
- Refer the matter to The Headmaster or designated member of staff.

Bullying can be very subtle and staff should be aware of problems that can arise with older pupils misusing their powers over younger pupils, pupils of the same age and a dominant character. Refer to the Policy on Bullying.

It is very rare that bullying constitutes abuse, and all serious cases of bullying must be referred to The Headmaster or his Deputy before further action is taken.

SCHOOL PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF.

In line with current procedure a member of staff accused of abuse will be suspended from duty so that the allegation can be investigated fairly. A suspension does not imply guilt, it is for the protection of both child and adult. The Headmaster and the Governors will then investigate the allegation immediately and a decision as to the course of action will be arrived at with all expediency. If the allegation is not substantiated, the member of staff will be reinstated immediately. However, should there be any substance to the allegation disciplinary procedures will be initiated and investigations may take place, involving:

- Social Care Services
- Police

If abuse is reported, the Social Services Inspection Unit will:

- Decide to what degree the school did not safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.
- Decide whether the school acted appropriately according to child protection procedures.
- Decide whether the child was safeguarded after the allegation of abuse.
- Decide what lessons may be learned from the experience.

REFERENCES:

DfES Circular 10/95 "Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Education Service".

DfES Green Paper "Every Child Matters" 2003

DfES / 0027 / Sept 2004 "Safeguarding Children in Education".

Dept. Health Publications 2003: "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. Summary"

The Home Office 2004: "Children & Families: Safer from Sexual Crime. The Sexual Offences Act 2003"

APPENDIX 2

Guidance on how to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse:

general points

- show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- keep calm
- look at the child directly
- be honest
- tell the child you will need to let someone else know: **don't promise confidentiality**
- even when a child has broken a rule, he or she is not to blame for the abuse
- be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- never push for information: if the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let him or her know that you are always ready to listen

helpful things you may say or show:

- I understand what you are saying
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

DO NOT SAY:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else."

CONCLUDING

- again reassure the child that he or she was right to tell you and show acceptance
- let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let him or her know what happens
- contact the appropriate senior member of staff or agency
- consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

Approved by the Governing Body on 25th January 2012 and signed on its behalf

Mr AP Byrne
Chair