

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

January 2010

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

- To ensure there is an effective policy and procedure for managing situations where there is suspected or disclosed abuse as outlined in this document.
- To ensure the well being of every individual child.
- The person designated to take responsibility for Child Protection within the school is the Headteacher. In the event of his absence from school the Designated Teacher is the Deputy Head. In the absence of both the Head and Deputy the most senior Co-ordinator takes responsibility.
- Child protection can be woven with many aspects of the existing curriculum through integration in a topic/theme approach.
- To prepare children to resist abuse.
- To provide children with strategies for making judgements about people, recognising and expressing their own feelings, and dealing with threatening situations both with peers and adults.
- To build opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision-making.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- To report to the person responsible for Child Protection of any concerns over individual children.
- To support the ethos of the school by exhibiting tolerance, sensitivity and negotiation.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

- Bullying is an abuse of children and all staff have an important part to play in preventing all forms of bullying and taking appropriate action. See Whole School Behaviour Policy.

Emotional Abuse - This is where a child consistently faces a lack of love and affection, or is continually threatened by verbal attacks, taunting and shouting. Children who have been emotionally abused may seem sad, cry a lot and display apathetic or aggressive behaviour. They may well have a lack of confidence and low self-esteem.

Physical Abuse – This is where a children is physically hurt. It can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. It also involves giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol. Physical Abuse can leave signs such as frequent bruising, burns fractures and cut all without reasonable explanation of cause.

Neglect – This is where parents fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children – like food, clothes, warmth and medical care or leaving children alone. Children who have been neglected suffer a number of difficulties; they may seem unusually withdrawn and miserable, they may be over-aggressive, having eating and nutrition problems and be dirty and smelly.

Sexual Abuse – This is when children are exploited sexually by adults who use them to meet their own sexual needs. It includes sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex and exposing children to pornographic materials. Children who have been sexually abused often become depressed and with drawn; they display unusually aggressive behaviour, maybe eating problems and relationships with adults that exclude others. They may display over-sexualised behaviour inappropriate for their age.

PROCEDURES

- We will follow the procedures set out in the document produced by the Milton Keynes Child Protection Committee & Milton Keynes Interagency procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Should a teacher be concerned about any aspect of child abuse then it is his/her responsibility to talk to colleagues and/or Year Co-ordinator to ascertain whether similar concerns are/have been noted in order to differentiate between accidental injury and abuse.
- Should similar concerns or suspicions be felt then a sensitive approach needs to be made to the child to minimise distress, embarrassment and misunderstanding.
- If a child makes a disclosure then the teacher or adult will listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief, accepting what is said and taking notes.
- Appropriate words will need to be used to reassure the child should further action felt to be necessary. Don't promise confidentiality, we have a duty to refer, as our first priority must be the protection of the child, not the parents' feelings.
- Only ask open questions such as 'Anything else that you want to tell me?' 'Yes?' 'And?'
- Do not ask the child to repeat this information to another member of staff.
- These concerns must then be put in writing **immediately** by the teacher, signed and dated and given **directly** to the Head. If the Head is absent then staff should refer them to the Deputy Head and in the case of both their absences from school to the most senior Year Co-ordinator. Staff must be specific, giving details and verbatim speech if possible, times, dates and witnesses. They should distinguish between hearsay, gossip and observation. A note should be made of any accompanying non-verbal behaviour occurring at the time and also the way the information was imparted. A diagram is a useful way of recording bruising, for example see Appendix 1.
- Teachers will know that any concerns expressed and taken further may be made known to the parents of the child. They may also be required by a court. Any discussions with parents and reactions of the parents to the child should be recorded.

- The designated teachers are responsible for:
 - a) Adhering to the procedures set out in the Agency Procedures manual and school staff handbook.
 - b) Notifying the Education Welfare Officer (currently Jayne Murphy) if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the Child Protection Register of more than two days.
 - c) Keeping written records of concerns about children even where there is no need to make a formal referral to Children's Services.
 - d) Keeping all records in a secure location.
 - e) Indication on pupil's folder's if further confidential information is available.
- Any telephone call made by the Head to Social Services or other external agency will be recorded and kept in a file in the Child Protection drawer.
- It is then the responsibility of the Social Services with the assistance and co-operation of other professionals to focus on the investigation of the alleged offences.
- Any child thought to be at risk will be closely checked by teachers – observed and listened to.
- Siblings of a child suspected of being abused will have their own class teacher by the Headteacher or in her absence another Designated Teacher, to ensure adequate and appropriate vigilance is carried out.
- Children who are already on the at risk register and who have case conference or core group conferences held on them will have a member of the school staff attend these multi-agency meetings. It might be the Head, or the person nominated by –the head normally the child's class teacher – who will attend these Case Conferences or Multi-Agency meetings concerning children at risk. It is expected that the teacher will prepare for this conference, having written or verbal contributions to make based on fact and observation. All Core Group members must attend all Core Group Meetings.
- Staff will support each other when there is the possibility of, or occurrence of, a parental reaction to the school's necessary action.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- It must be remembered that these children form a particularly vulnerable group. Empathy with families of special needs children must not lead to a reluctance to use, or avoidance of, child protection procedures.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Every member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) has the responsibility to be alert to the possibility that a pupil may have been or may be at risk of being abused.
- Newly Qualified Teachers should have acquired the necessary foundation to develop a working knowledge of their contractual, legal, administrative and pastoral responsibilities as teachers.
- The Headteacher as the Designated Teacher and in the event of absence of the Deputy Headteacher must take advantage of the in-service training provided through the GEST budget in order to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

- All other members of staff must be aware of the identity of the Designated Teacher with whom they must make direct contact as soon as they have concerns about a child.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- It is the class teacher's responsibility to be vigilant about those children considered to be at risk.
- The teacher must be aware of the feelings and anxieties felt by a child who knows that his/her welfare is being monitored.
- Should there be concerns about a child's home consultation must be made as to the most appropriate person to make enquiries.
- The school by the way of the designated person will have a key role on the assessment of the child, the implementation of the child protection plan, reviewing the case and deciding with the other agencies on the appropriateness of de-registration and monitoring the overall process.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A COLLEAGUE, INCLUDING THE HEADTEACHER.

- The Headteacher must be informed about any allegation against a member of staff.
- When an allegation is made against a teacher there should be urgent initial consideration by the Headteacher as to whether or not there are sufficient circumstances to warrant an investigation. In such cases the Headteacher must refer the matter to the Social Services and inform the Milton Keynes area Education Manager. All actions will follow the guidelines on practise and procedure (JOINT NEOST/TEACHER UNION – SEPTEMBER 2002)
- Procedures for dealing with allegations will be in line with local Area Child Protection Committee practise and must not compromise child protection but help to keep damaging allegations to a minimum.
- The aim of all investigations is that they should be conducted as speedily as possible consistent with establishing the full facts. Arrangements should be made for the teacher or his/her representative to be contacted regularly with information on progress and developments on the case. These arrangements should not preclude the teacher or his/her representative from contacting those conducting the investigation at any time.
- There will be two possible types of investigation:
 - a) By the police, the Social Services and the NSPCC under the local child protection procedures.
 - b) Under the teachers' disciplinary procedures (see Annexe of Circular 10/95)
- In some cases the Police may wish to interview the teacher against whom the allegation has been made before approaching the Headteacher. The police may act independently of the school, particularly if the alleged offence is unconnected with the teachers' professional life. Where the police are involved it would normally be expected that Police interviews would be undertaken on school premises and such appointments made for such interviews at reasonable times.

- Suspension of a member of staff must not be undertaken without good reason and circumstances in which suspension occurs include:
 - a) Where the child/children are at risk.
 - b) Where the allegation is so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible.
 - c) Where suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.

- The Headteacher will not automatically suspend or recommend suspension of a teacher against whom an allegation is made. In all cases where suspension is being considered the Headteacher will advise the teacher to seek assistance from his/her professional organisation.

- Where suspension of a teacher is being considered an interview must be arranged outside pupil contact time which will be part of the investigative procedure. Where the teacher is called to interview when suspension is a possible outcome he/she should be advised to seek advice and assistance from his/her professional organisation or may be assisted by a friend. The teacher should also be informed of his/her rights under the school's disciplinary procedure.

- The teacher should be given as much information as possible including reasons for any proposed suspension provided such information does not interfere with the investigation. The teacher should be given opportunities to make representations.

- If allegations are made against the Head then the nominated Governor has the responsibility for liaison with the LEA.

RESOURCES

Kidscape Primary Kit
 Kids can say No - Rolf Harris Video
 Keeping Safe: A Practical Guide to Talking to Children by M.Elliott
 A Positive Response to Child Sexual Abuse – Information for Primary Teachers.
 The Listening School: Working Towards a Preventative Curriculum in Primary Schools by J Gilmore and P Dymand.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Children Act 1989 requires that all children and their families are entitled to equal access to services which do not discriminate on the grounds of religion, ethnic origin, linguistic background, culture, gender, ability or social grouping. This does not mean that all will receive an identical service but that services will recognise and respect their particular differences and meet their particular needs.

Signed..... Date.....