

ST AIDAN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY/ PRACTICE & PROCEDURES

School considers the protection, safety and wellbeing of children in its care a major priority and responsibility and are committed to following the Area Child protection Committee's (ACPC) and LEA's child protection procedures and guidance. We will refer to Social Services Department when appropriate, work together with other agencies, attend and provide reports for Child Protection conferences and contribute where appropriate to any Child Protection Plan.

1.2 Definitions

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Note that these categories may overlap.

- 1.3** The school recognises and accepts that teachers, along with other adults associated with the school, because of their unique position, are well placed to observe children and note any emotional, behavioural or physical signs which may be suggestive of child abuse or have concerns about their care. We recognise that the relationship between teachers, pupils and parents which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to the disclosure of abuse.

Recognising the necessity and nature of good relationships with parents of children in its care and attempting to preserve these wherever possible, the school, however, acknowledges that the child's protection is paramount.

School are supported in all matters relating to Child Protection by the Education Social Work Service who are available to give advice, support and guidance regarding child protection matters.

- 1.4** In order to prepare all staff for their responsibility in relation to the protection of children, they have received basic child protection awareness training on (or have planned it for September 2005) (by either Designated Teacher, ESW or outside agency). New staff are made aware of child protection issues on induction.

- 1.5** School will always follow the procedures in the Area Child Protection Committee's handbook.

All staff (teaching & non-teaching), have read this policy and the Education procedures in the A.C.P.C. procedures manual.

- 1.6** All newly appointed staff will be made aware of this policy and be familiarised with the L.E.A. and A.C.P.C. procedures on induction.

- 1.7** The senior member of staff with designated responsibility for Child protection is Gillian Soper. She will liaise with the school's S.E.N.C.O. who is Jane Cleary and other staff where appropriate. The nominated governor for Child Protection is Tony Shepherd and the designated deputy is John Wood.

1.8 School Procedure for Staff

Any member of staff who:-

- a. Has suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play, or when the explanation given appears inconsistent with the injury.
- b. Notes behaviours or actions, which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered abuse. (May include worrying drawings or play)
- c. Is concerned that a child maybe suffering from lack of care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- d. Has concerns that a child is presenting any signs or symptoms consistent with suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- e. Notes significant changes in a child's presentation otherwise unexplained.
- f. Receives hints or a disclosure of abuse from the child, another pupil, parent or member of the public.
- g. Becomes aware that a Schedule 1 offender has moved into a household with children present or otherwise in a situation where that person may be posing a risk to children.

MUST IMMEDIATELY REPORT THIS TO THE DESIGNATED C.P. TEACHER

1.9 Remember

- It is *not* the responsibility of teachers/care/support staff to investigate abuse nor decide if abuse has taken place. We do, however, have a duty to act on concern and refer to the investigating agencies. (Social Services & Police).
- Always listen to and take seriously any disclosure of abuse. Keep questions to a minimum, only asking these to clarify information or to assist the child who is finding it difficult to talk. Any questions should be 'open' i.e. not have the answer embedded in the question e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened' rather than ' Did x hit you?' Do not interrogate the child. Do not make the child repeat it all to another person. The information needed from the child is only that which is sufficient to make a referral for further investigation, not for staff to decide the validity of the disclosure.
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise.

- Do not express your feelings or any judgements regarding the alleged abuser.
- If a child confides in you and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the child sensitively that you have a responsibility to refer the information to the designated teacher in order to protect the child from further abuse. ON NO ACCOUNT WILL THE CHILD BE PROMISED ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY. Reassure and support the child as far as possible, that only those who 'need to know' in order to protect will be told, explain what will happen next and try to ensure that the child is involved as far as possible and appropriate.
- Do not approach parents at this stage, the designated teacher will decide based on the information if and when parents will be spoken to
- Child protection information is CONFIDENTIAL and will be shared only on a 'need to know' basis as determined by the designated/Head teacher.

1.10 Action by Designated Teacher

- a) Staff will immediately inform the designated teacher of their concerns. In the absence of the Designated Teacher staff will inform the headteacher or other senior member of school staff.
- b) The Designated Teacher will decide what needs to happen next. The first consideration will be the need to address any urgent medical needs of the child.
- c) The Designated Teacher is entitled to make an enquiry as to whether the child is on, or has been on, the Child Protection Register 01609 780611.
- d) The Designated Teacher can consult with the Liaison Education Social Worker and/or the Senior ESW or the Specialist Senior ESW or designated LEA officer who will offer support and advice with regard to how to proceed. They may also consult with the local Social Services Service Manager.
- e) The Designated Teacher will decide, based on A.C.P.C. and L.E.A. guidance and if necessary after consultation as above, whether to talk to parents. Good child protection practice rests within a climate of openness and honesty. Parents will in general and where possible be spoken to unless to do so may, place the child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation or place the member of staff or others at risk.
- f) Consideration will also be given to not informing parents if the child expressly does not want this. An inability to contact parents will not

cause undue delay to making a referral. The designated teacher will not fail to make any necessary child protection referral, when the parents disagree with this decision. The designated teacher will make clear that they are following L.E.A. and A.C.P.C. guidelines .

- f) The Designated Teacher will decide whether to make a formal referral to social services via their Customer Relations unit (see contacts list) and follow this up in writing using the standard referral form.
- g) In cases where: the child is at immediate risk; there is clear physical evidence or the child has made a clear disclosure, referral to SSD should be made immediately. If the above consultation process is not possible or cannot be completed within a very short timescale (because for e.g. the designated teacher is not available) then it is the responsibility of the teacher who gleaned the information to ensure that a speedy referral is made to the SSD. Any member of school staff is entitled to liaise/consult and to make a referral. Absence of key personnel should never prevent referral when there is immediate risk, evidence or direct disclosure.
- h) If it is decided not to make a referral at this stage, the action taken should be fully documented, together with the reasons for the decisions not to proceed further. The Designated Teacher may advise that further monitoring is necessary. Parents will be informed given regard to e) above.
- i) The designated teacher may consider that whilst a C.P. referral may not be appropriate, it would be appropriate to make a referral for services from e.g. Pupil & Parent Services, School Health Service, Social Services Child in Need. This should only ever be done with the agreement of parents. However failure to agree may, in some circumstances of itself be a child protection concern.

1.11 Action Following Child Protection Referral

- The designated teacher will make regular contact to Social Services to provide any necessary information and ensure that we are, updated, clear of any action being taken by them and clear of any action for school to take.
- The designated teacher or other appropriate member of staff will wherever possible, contribute to the strategy discussion.
- The designated teacher or other appropriate member of staff will provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference. This will include expressing a professional view, based on the information shared as to whether the child or children subject of the Conference should be placed on the Child Protection Register on the grounds that they appear to be at risk of continuing significant harm.

- If the child or children are placed on the Child Protection Register, the school will contribute to the Child Protection Plan, attend Core Group Meetings and review Child Protection Conferences.
- All reports written will wherever possible, be shared with parents prior to meetings. If we are in doubt regarding sharing certain information we will discuss with a senior member of E.S.W. staff.
- Supply cover is available for the L.E.A. for all of the above child protection meetings.
- Where the designated teacher disagrees with a decision made by Social Services e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference he/she will discuss this with a senior member of E.S.W. staff and they will together agree how to proceed.

1.12 Recording and Monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given be recorded verbatim where possible and note made of location and description of injuries seen. The Designated Teacher, has agreed the following system of monitoring and review with staff. The Designated Teacher will record the meeting with child each week and make clear to the child that they always are available for information.

All C.P. documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the headteacher and designated teacher. The Data Protection Act 1998 provides for C.P. records to be exempt from disclosure where this would not be in the best interests of the child. These records will be transferred to any future school the child moves to - clearly marked Child Protection, Confidential for attention of Designated Teacher Child Protection.

1.13 Partnership with parents

School recognise that the protection of children should always be of paramount importance and consideration and that the primary focus in child protection should always be the child's safety and welfare. However good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open, honest working partnership with parents. We will ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We will respect parents right to privacy and confidentiality unless they give permission for information to be shared or it is necessary to infringe this in order to protect the child or children.

When a referral has been made without informing parents(see1.10e) we will clearly explain that we have acted:

- a) following consultation and
- b) in line with our DfES guidance, this policy and L.E.A. and A.C.P.C. procedures

We will make parents aware of this policy and guidance in the school brochure. This states that we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with them, however that we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect the child or children. Parents will be made aware that they can view this policy on request.

1.14 Supporting the Child

The school will continue to support the child and work together with other agencies involved with the family.

Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age & understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why. We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.

The Head Teacher / Designated Teacher will decide which members of staff “need to know” and how much they “need to know” in order to support and protect the child. This will take into account the acute difficulty and embarrassment many children have knowing that staff are aware of their situation and central to the decision will be the need to protect the child whilst maintaining wherever possible their privacy & dignity and right to confidentiality.

1.15 Child Protection in the Curriculum

School are committed to raising pupils awareness that they have a right to not be treated or touched in a way that makes them unhappy or hurt, that sometimes they may not feel able to stop an adult doing something that they do not like, however that there are people in and out of school who will listen to them and take steps to protect them from harm.

1.16 Training

The Designated Teacher has received Basic Child Protection Training on June 2003 provided by Senior Specialist Education Social Worker and will where possible attend specific, appropriate LCPC or ACPC training days. He/She will ensure that all staff are aware of child protection issues and procedures by policy, handbook and training.

1.17 Safeguards for Pupils & Staff

The school will follow L.E.A. guidance regarding the safe recruitment selection and employment of staff in order to ensure that every effort is made to deter and prevent any person who may pose a risk to children working with them. This will include ensuring that all relevant personnel are police checked and checked against list 99. Staff volunteers who have not been checked in this manner will not be allowed substantial unsupervised access to children.

School staff will always act professionally and conduct any relationships with children in a professional manner.

Staff will not be put in a position which renders them particularly vulnerable to false allegations of abuse. Any concerns that, for whatever reason, a member of staff may be vulnerable will be shared with the designated teacher and headteacher who will make appropriate arrangements to reduce/eradicate this risk. The decisions made will be recorded and include the reasons for them. If the risk relates to a particular child a copy will be retained on that child's file (C.P. file where appropriate). Parents, where appropriate, will be informed.

Any member of staff who has concerns that the behaviour of another member of the schools staff is or may be abusive to children will immediately inform the headteacher. If these concerns relate to the headteacher, the designated teacher and/or designated governor will be informed. (Include or reference school's whistle blowing arrangements).

Any member of staff who feels that, for whatever reason, they may behave in a manner which is abusive or neglectful to pupils has a responsibility to report this to the headteacher who will make arrangements to secure that safety and protection of pupils. Advice, where necessary, may be sought by the head from Education Personnel.

The school's policy on physical restraint relates to this policy, where a 'restraint' appears to have been conducted in a manner which could constitute abuse these procedures will be followed.

Where abuse by children is either suspected or becomes known, the designated teacher will consult with the headteacher and Senior E.S.W. in order to secure appropriate arrangements for the safety and protection of all and make child protection referrals where appropriate. School have made appropriate arrangements for ensuring the safe use of the Internet by focusing on this issue in IT lessons and making parents aware through the newsletter. Parents have to consent to the child's use of Internet.

1.18 Allegations of abuse made against a member of staff

All children will be listened to and taken seriously whenever making an allegation of a CP nature, irrespective of the person they are making the allegation about. We acknowledge that this is particularly difficult when the

subject of the allegation is a colleague and/or friend. On no account, however, should the person listening to the allegation offer an alternative explanation or blame the child, the L.E.A. procedures in the A.C.P.C. handbook and NYCC Personnel Guidance Sec. 22 of Personnel Manual will always be followed. It is acknowledged that such allegations may be malicious misplaced or false. We also acknowledge that education staff may on occasion be abusive to children. It is essential for both the child and the members of staff that allegations are investigated properly in order that children are protected and that any member of staff who has been falsely accused can be proven innocent. In the event that an allegation is made against the Head Teacher the matter should be reported to the Designated Teacher or the nominated Governor, whose role it is to ensure that the agreed procedure is followed, they will proceed as the 'headteacher' as follows:

- 1.19** The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the headteacher who will take steps to secure the immediate safety needs of the child or children and seek any urgent medical attention required. The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless necessary to address the immediate safety of children.

The headteacher will consult the lead L.E.A. officer for Child Protection or the Specialist Senior E.S.W. for Child Protection in order to decide how to proceed. This decision will be made with regard to D.f.E.S. guidance and L.E.A. procedures designed to secure the rights and well-being of children and staff.

Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff. The headteacher will inform the nominated governor for child protection of any allegation against a member of staff. (Please refer to Sec.22 of Personnel Manual, D.F.E.S. guidance and L.E.A. procedures in the A.C.P.C. Procedures if you wish to expand this section).

1.20 Children who go missing

When a child who is on the child protection register 'goes missing' or is significantly absent the designated teacher will immediately inform Social Services. When other children go missing or change school and information is not available regarding the receiving school, the school will immediately inform the Education Social Work Service, who will take appropriate action to trace the child. This will be referred to in the Attendance Policy.

1.21 Support for Staff

Child protection work can be difficult, distressing and extremely stressful. School staff who become involved in this area of work will therefore often need support and a 'listening ear'. Staff will be supported by The Designated Teacher.. The designated teacher will be supported by the ESW.

1.22 Role of Governors

There will be an annual item on the Governor's Meeting agenda to; be informed of the no. of children in school on the Child Protection Register (not to include names or details); consider any training needs; be informed of any training undertaken; review this policy.

Additionally governors will undertake their responsibilities in relation to allegations against staff and any disciplinary procedures.

1.23 Personnel Changes

Any change to personnel undertaking the roles of designated child protection teacher or nominated governor will be reported to the Specialist Senior Education Social Worker (Child Protection) in order that L.E.A. records can be updated and training offered.

1.24 OFSTED Inspections

If an OFSTED Inspection comment suggests that school should address any matters regarding child protection, this will be communicated to be the Specialist Senior E.S.W. for Child Protection who will offer any necessary advice, guidance or training. School will also report any positive comments or practice in order that this can be shared to promote good practice in all schools.