

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy Statement

Elmfield School recognises its legal duty under s.175/157 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from “significant harm”. These duties are defined by:

- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (DfES 2006)
- “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (DfES 2006)
- The DSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures (2007)

Elmfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people both within the school environment and outside. Because of their day to day contact with children and young people, education staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in children’s behaviour or their failure to develop. We need, therefore to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring, aware of the procedures to be followed if they have suspicions and have the confidence to follow those procedures.

Introduction

- This policy applies to all staff, including volunteers, and Council members
- It is to be renewed each year
- Safeguarding children encompasses positive support for all children as well as child protection issues
- This policy identifies people with key responsibilities for child protection issues, outline guidance for signs of abuse and clear procedures to follow in such cases in line with locally agreed procedures
- Related Documents:
 - Anti Bullying Policy
 - Staff Recruitment Policy
 - Restraint Policy
 - Incident or Allegation of Restraint
 - Staff Code of Conduct Policy
 - Behaviour and Discipline Policy
 - Confidentiality Policy

Aims and Objectives

- Ensuring the practice of safe recruitment with staff, volunteers and Council members for suitability to work with children
- Raising awareness among staff of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills and confidence to keep themselves safe

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting suspected cases of child abuse
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their child protection plan
- Ensuring at all times a safe environment for children and their learning by
 - establishing and maintaining an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and they are listened to
 - ensuring children know there are adults they can talk to if they have worries
 - including opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills needed to recognise abuse and stay safe

Procedures

Elmfield School will ensure that all staff follow the procedures set out by the DSCB and take account of guidance issued by the DCSF to:

- ensure the designated staff members have sufficient status and training to take lead responsibility for child protection decisions: such training to be renewed every two years (currently at least Level 2 Child Protection)
- ensure up to date basic training of all staff at least every three years
- ensure that Elmfield operates safe recruitment procedures for all staff including volunteers
- ensure new staff have read and understood the Child Protection Policy and know who are the people responsible for safeguarding within the school and what their role involves
- ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the person(s) responsible for child protection
- ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the Parents' Handbook.
- ensure that parents are aware that this policy is available on request , and make the policy available on the website
- develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at child protection meetings
- keep written records of concerns about children, even when there is no need to refer the matter immediately
- ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations
- ensure that all staff are aware of what to do if there are concerns around a child

Safer Recruitment and Employment Practices

- Elmfield School will follow the 'Safer Recruitment' and 'Managing Allegations Against People who work with Children'. The Agenda Group will deal with allegations made against staff.
- In addition to this Elmfield School will have routine systems for continually monitoring the performance of staff ensuring compliance with both Child Protection procedures and the code of good practice.
- All allegations against people who work with children will be passed on to the LADO (LA Designated Officer).

Confidentiality

- The degree of confidentiality is governed by the over-riding need to protect the child. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.
- Teachers and others working with a child or family should **make clear to those providing information that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if the withholding of it will prejudice a child's future.**
- Advice should be sought from the Social Care Team on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
- Information will be stored in a secure place with restricted access to designated people and be maintained in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Curriculum

Child Protection and wider child safety issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate.

Training and Development

According to *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2006)* the staff who work with children will undertake training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for Child Protection effectively. This will be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals for all staff. Temporary staff and volunteers will be made aware of the school's arrangement for child protection and their responsibilities. The Child Protection Officers will receive refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge up to date. At least one member of staff involved in recruitment will undertake the Safer Recruitment training either on-line or through DSCB, each interview panel must at least have one trained member of staff present.

Procedures for staff at Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

1. Inform one of the three designated Safeguarding Children Officers within the school by the end of the lesson and **never** later than the end of the day.
2. The designated person must arrange appropriate treatment for any injury to the child without delay.
3. Concerns about the well-being of a child must be reported both verbally and in writing to one of the three Safeguarding Officers in the school. Record all concerns in writing, giving the following: full name of the pupil; date of birth; class and the reasons for your concern. **Written records must be kept at all stages** by one of the designated officers.
4. When recording a conversation or an incident this **must** be done within 15 minutes of it having been observed or taking place, and **before** discussing it with anyone else to avoid the incident being 'coloured' by other conversations or opinions. Each witnessing member of staff must record their observation separately. All written records must be handed to a Safeguarding Officer, who, after assessing any need for action, files the accounts in the Child Protection File. The Child Protection File is available only to the three Safeguarding Officers. Individual cases may be made available to the school doctor and to Social Services. It is otherwise completely confidential.
5. Action to be taken might include in-school support, an appointment with the school doctor, a referral to Social Services.
6. Where there is concern, Social Services must be informed.

7. In a situation when a pupil is believed to be in real/imminent danger a member of staff should contact at least one of the Safeguarding Officers, failing that the administrator, and failing that a member of the Agenda Group.
A risk assessment should then be made and acted on.
A written account must be signed and handed to one of the Safeguarding Officers as soon as possible following the event.
8. If the child is felt to be in any danger he/she should not be allowed to go home and the arrangements for that are to be made in liaison with the Duty Officer at the local Social Services.
9. Any in-school action, or action involving the parents should not be taken without informing the Safeguarding Officers who may already be aware of relevant information held confidentially about that pupil.
10. If any of the people listed in 7 above are unavailable, a member of staff has the duty to inform Social Services when there are significant concerns for the safety and welfare of a pupil. A written report must be given to one of those listed in 7 above within two hours.
11. No member of staff may ever take a pupil home with them without the express agreement of that pupil's parent or guardian.
12. School staff should be prepared to attend case conferences, and supply information, in writing if possible, concerning any allegations made at school, or other concerns about the children's behaviour or progress at school, or contact with parents. If unable to attend written reports should be submitted.
13. School staff are required to be part of the Child Protection Plan formulated by the case conference to monitor future behaviour, and where appropriate to be part of any appointed working group.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Elmfield School to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Elmfield School will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

All allegations or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with these procedures. They will be applied when there is an allegation or concern that any person, who works with children, in connection with their employment, voluntary or personal activity, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated they are unsuitable to work with children

These behaviours will be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (see page 6). This includes concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual
- Grooming i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence

- Other ‘grooming’ behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc)
- Possession of indecent photographs of children/ pseudo-photographs of children

The definition of working with children includes paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and carers. It may include everyone who works in the school including administrative and other support staff.

Action if there are concerns

Allegations of abuse against a staff member

- These will be treated seriously and investigated appropriately.
- If an allegation is made the staff member must be informed as soon as possible after the result of the initial investigation is known.
- Consideration will be given to removing the staff member from the premises without prejudice
- At this point they are **not** invited to make a response.
- They must be warned that anything said will be recorded.
- The parents of any pupil involved will be fully informed.
- Any formal allegation of abuse will be reported to Social Services and OfSTED
- Incident or allegation of restraint form to be completed in such cases.

Allegations against another pupil

- All allegations must be treated seriously and investigated appropriately
- Consideration must be given as to whether an allegation should be treated under Child Protection and / or bullying procedures.
- Consideration must be given to informing Social Services.
- Parents of all children involved must be kept informed at all times.
- Consideration must be given to removing alleged perpetrators from the school premises.

Concerns about poor practice:

- Agenda Group will deal with it as a misconduct issue
- If it is about poor practice by one of the Safeguarding Officers or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair of the Council of Management who will decide on whether disciplinary action should be taken and the next steps to take

Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to a Safeguarding Officer who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk
- The Safeguarding Officers will refer the allegation to the Social Care Team who may involve the Police. All allegations against people who work with children will be passed onto the LADO (LA Designated Officer)
- The parents/carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Care Team

If it is one of the Safeguarding Officers who is the subject of the suspicion / allegation the Chair of the Council of Management should be informed who will refer the allegation to the Social Care Team.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- Agenda Group will liaise with the Chair of the Council of Management and make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care inquiries
- Irrespective of any findings by outside agencies Agenda Group and the Chair of the Council of Management will assess all individual cases to decide whether an individual can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particular where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases they must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Categories of Abuse defined as follows:

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. The situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen by proxy.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in any sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. 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 the other 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.

PUPIL TO PUPIL

- Any sexual or physical contact between pupils leading to significant harm.

Identifying abuse

Teachers and other school staff are well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, behavioural changes, or failure to develop which may indicate that abuse is taking place. Such signs may be the cause of suspicion, but they are not in themselves proof of abuse. Self harming including cutting, and mood swings may be further indicators of underlying abuse. Great care however should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.

Unexplained changes in behaviour or school performance may, but not necessarily, indicate abuse. The more obvious signs, such as bruises, may be apparent at times when the children change for physical education.

Inadequate clothing, poor growth or apparently deficient nutrition may indicate physical neglect, while attention seeking or excessive dependency may point to emotional neglect.

Dealing with the situation

- Do **not** cross-question the pupil.
- When a pupil makes a complaint questioning must be limited to the minimum necessary for clarification, **avoiding leading questions**.
- As soon as the allegation has been made no further questions should be asked.
- **The pupil is told that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people.**
- **This must be done and a written record passed on the same day to the Designated Senior Member of Staff currently Elisabeth Faulkner or one of the Safeguarding Officers – Debbie Nock or Gertraud Soukup.**

Designated member of staff:

Elisabeth Faulkner	01384 444412
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Child Protection Officers

Gertraud Soukup	01384 396702
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Administrator

Carrie Smith	01384 394633
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Coordination Group

Jackie Irving	01384 441442
Carrie Smith	01384 394633
Martin Dathan	01384 394709
Gertraud Soukup	01384 396702
Paul Georgiades	01384 374778

Council Member with responsibility for CP matters

Mike Vaughan 07729 565999

Social Services

Brierley Hill 01384 813000
Dudley 01384 813200
Halesowen 01384 815902/5905
Emergency Duty Team 5pm – 9am & week-ends 01384 818574

Child Abuse Investigation Unit

West Midlands Police 0845 113 5000
Emergency 999

Safeguarding and Review Unit 01384 81306