



Safeguarding Children: Child Protection Policy

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

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)*
- *Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) - Safeguarding Children Procedures*
<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>

Elmfield School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people both within the school environment and outside. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, and all staff who come into contact with children and their families and carers have a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, we will ensure that our approach is child centred. This means that we will consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Because of our 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. This includes concerns about possible radicalisation of pupils by extremist groups (the Prevent Duty), child sexual exploitation (CSE), internet abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence (HBV) or female genital mutilation (FGM). We need, therefore, to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring, to be aware of the procedures to be followed if the school has suspicions and to have the confidence to follow those procedures. This policy applies to all staff, council members and volunteers working in the school.

Please note, however, that anyone can make a direct referral to Children's Social Care or the Police if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child.

This policy identifies people with key responsibilities for Safeguarding, gives guidance for signs of abuse and outlines clear procedures to follow in such cases in line with locally agreed procedures. Safeguarding children encompasses positive support for all children as well as child protection issues.

Always check online for the most recent policy.

Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide information to enable all staff to carry out their duty of care responsibly.

The six main elements of the policy are:

- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment through checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting witnessed or suspected cases of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their child protection plans.
- Ensuring there are links with other safeguarding policies, for example the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Anti-Radicalisation Policy, the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and the Restraint Policy.

Because of their day-to-day contact with children, our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from harm.
- Ensure that children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried. This is likely to be the class teacher or guardian in the first instance.

Procedures

Elmfield School will ensure that all staff follow the procedures set out by the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department of Education (DfE) to:

- Ensure that we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The current Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school is the Education Lead, Diana Ball. The deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Elaine Sheppard.
- Ensure we have a nominated council member responsible for child protection. The current designated council member for child protection for the school is Rainer Klocke.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and every council member knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and her deputy, and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and its staff for child protection by making the parents aware of child protection policies and procedures through the annual summer letter.
- Ensure that parents are aware that this policy is available on request, and make the policy available on the school 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.

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- Develop links with other agencies that support the child such as the Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the Education Investigation Service (EIS) and the Education Psychology Service (EPS).
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; in a separate location to the main pupil file and under lock and key.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of what to do if there are concerns around a child. Appendix 1 refers to what to do if you are concerned. A multi-agency referral form (MARF) must be completed when making a referral and can be accessed from the DSCB website.

Role and Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (currently Diana Ball) has ultimate responsibility, management oversight and accountability for safeguarding and child protection.

When the school has concerns about a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what steps should be taken.

Child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Lead feels that their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and/or family. A written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when.

Child protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each child; the school will not keep family files. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance.

Access to these records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be restricted.

Parents will be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents will be in line with any home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility. **However, the school will not disclose to a parent any information held on a child if we have reason to believe that this could place the child at risk of significant harm.**

If a pupil leaves Elmfield, child protection records will be forwarded on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the pupil's new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools. We will record where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received.

If sending by post, pupil records will be sent by Special/Recorded Delivery. For audit purposes a note of all pupil records transferred or received will be kept in either paper or electronic format. This will include the child's name, date of birth, where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received.

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If a pupil is permanently excluded and moves to a Pupil Referral Unit, child protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

Where a vulnerable young person is moving to a Further Education establishment, consideration should be given to the student's wishes and feelings on his/her child protection information being passed on in order that the FE establishment can provide appropriate support.

Roles and Responsibilities of Governors and Governing Bodies

It is the responsibility of governing bodies and proprietors to ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must have regards to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016*, places statutory requirements on all governing bodies. Governing bodies must make sure that their school has policies and procedures in place and take into account any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, any local authority guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

Involving Parents/Carers

In general, we will discuss any child protection concerns with parents/carers before approaching other agencies, and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. Appropriate staff will approach parents/carers after consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, there may be occasions when the school will contact another agency before informing parents/carers because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm to the child. Parents/carers will be informed about our Child Protection Policy through our website and the annual summer letter.

Safer Recruitment and Employment Practices

Elmfield School will follow Safer Recruitment processes (DSCB procedures) which will include the following:

- Declaration of the intent to undertake a DBS check in the advertisement
- Ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has had training in Safer Recruitment
- Ensuring that references are gained before interview (as far as possible)
- Ensuring that a safeguarding question is included in the interview
- Ensuring that any gaps in employment are explored at interview
- Ensuring that references are checked carefully
- Undertaking a DBS check on all new employees at the level relevant to the position
- Ensuring that all Council members have an enhanced DBS check
- Undertaking a Prohibition of Teaching check for everyone engaged in "teaching work"
- Recording all the above checks promptly on the Single Central Record.

The school will follow *Managing Allegations against Staff* (DSCB Procedures). The Education Lead and Bursar will deal with allegations made against school staff. All allegations against the Education Lead or Bursar will be referred to the Chair of the Council of Management.

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In addition to this the school will have routine systems for continually monitoring the performance of staff ensuring compliance with child protection procedures and the staff code of conduct. All staff within the school will adhere to the *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Children and Young People in Education Settings (October 2015)*, which covers a wide range of issues around staff conduct.

If any concerns or allegations are made against members of staff, these should be discussed in the first instance with the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), a Dudley local authority post-holder. It is useful at this stage to provide the full names of the member of staff and child involved in the allegation, their dates of birth, addresses and details of any previous concerns. All allegations against people who work with children will be passed on to the LADO in accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* and the *DSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures*. A LADO Referral and Monitoring form will be need to be completed.

If staff have concerns about a fellow colleague which they feel are not being heard, they should follow the procedure outlined in the Whistle-Blowing Policy. The NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline is available for staff in our school who do not feel able to raise concerns internally regarding child protection failures. Staff can call 0800-028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Any employee who is dismissed or resigns due to a child protection case will be referred to the DBS, who will consider the future risk and harm posed by the individual to vulnerable groups including children.

The Single Central Record must be in place and include all the areas covered in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)*. Further advice on this can be sought from Elmfield's Bursar, Lesley Taberer.

Staff support

We recognise the potentially stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work. We will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through any anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to seek further support as appropriate.

Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. 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.

Staff within our school are clear that if they have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, they will have a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action, although staff members can make a referral to children's social care themselves.

We are committed to the Early Help approach and staff are able to identify learners who need support through this route. The Early Help approach helps children, young people and families to get the help they need at the right time. An Early Help assessment can be undertaken by the school in conjunction with the family and a member of the Dudley Early help team. This helps everyone to understand what support is needed by a family and can facilitate the provision of other services both within and outside of the school.

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If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the Single Point of Access Team (phone 0300 555 0050) and/or the police immediately.

Advice should be sought from the Single Point of Access Team (SPA) in the borough in which the child lives, 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).

It may be necessary to liaise with and, where necessary, challenge other agencies involved, in order to obtain relevant information to support a child appropriately. If a child resides in another borough but attends Elmfield School, the school will liaise with the borough in which the child resides.

If a child who is subject to a child protection plan leaves Elmfield, his/her information will be transferred to the new school immediately and the child's social worker informed.

Curriculum

Child protection and wider child safety issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate. These might include self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, sex and relationship education, online safety and bullying.

Other areas of work

Our Child Protection Policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that pupils are treated with respect and dignity, are taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice and are listened to.

All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example Anti-bullying, Anti-Radicalisation, Behaviour and Discipline, and Restraint, will be linked to ensure a whole school approach.

Staff will follow DSCB Children Procedures if there are concerns around peer-on-peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

Virtual School

Elmfield School is committed to working with the Virtual School Head to support the progress of looked after children in the school and to meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan (PEP).

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Elmfield is committed to working with children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities who often face additional safeguarding challenges. For example:

- Adults can make assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without showing any outward signs
- Children with SEN and disabilities can experience communication barriers and have difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

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Training and Development

Elmfield is committed to ensuring all staff are trained to a high standard. The detail around this is set out below.

According to *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)*, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and her deputy should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. The training should be updated every two years. In addition to their formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be updated (for example via e-bulletins, meetings with other designated safeguarding leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. The training should be regularly updated and in line with advice from DSCB. In addition all staff members should receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Implementation, Review and Monitoring

Implementation will take place by ensuring that this policy is discussed at Council meetings and by ensuring that all staff are made aware of its existence. The policy will be monitored and updated on an annual basis during the summer holidays by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be reviewed by the Council of Management at its first meeting of the year. A copy of this policy will be available on the school's website, at Reception and in the Yellow Passage.

Supporting Documents

- *DSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures* <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)*
- *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (October 2015)*

Related School Policies

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Anti-Radicalisation Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Missing Pupil Procedure
- Restraint Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Whistle-Blowing Policy

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APPENDIX 1: What to do if you are concerned

If you have concerns outside the immediate environment, e.g. about a parent or carer:

- Report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (currently Diana Ball) who should decide what action to take. This may include seeking advice and/or making a referral to the Single Point of Access (SPA) Team or the Police as soon as possible.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, you should report your concerns to the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Elaine Sheppard) or one of the other safeguarding officers (Ian Neale and Jackie Irving) to ensure there is no delay in seeking advice or making a referral.
- The SPA Team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide how to involve the parents/carers. Parents should not be informed if to do so would increase the risk to the child.
- You should maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

A detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include as much of the following information as possible:

- The reasons for your concern
- Full name and date of birth of the child
- Names and dates of birth of the child's family/household members
- Other agencies/professionals involved with the family
- The child's first language and any special needs
- The child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity
- Any work you may already have undertaken with the child and family

All incidents will be reported on a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

The Prevent Duty

If you know or suspect that someone is being drawn into extremism or radicalised, it is your responsibility to report it. This means contacting the local Prevent Co-ordinator whose name is John Hodt (phone number 01384-814736; email address john.hodt@dudley.gov.uk). You can and should also report it to Diana Ball as the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead but you have a legal obligation to report it to John Hodt yourself.

If you have allegations or suspicions about someone working with children or young people, e.g. a teaching assistant:

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

The accused member of staff will:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process;
- If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

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Elmfield School assures all staff and 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. (See also our Whistle-Blowing Policy.)

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, 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 indicates they are likely to pose a risk of harm to children.

These behaviours will be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. (See Appendix 2 for more details.) 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 the age of 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (ss16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Grooming, i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Other grooming behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text/e-mail messages or images, contact by social media, inappropriate gifts, socialising)
- Possession of sexual images of children or pseudo-photographs of children.

The definition of working with children includes paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and carers (including foster and adoptive carers). It includes everyone who works in or volunteers at Elmfield School, including administrative and other support staff.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Education Lead will deal with it as a misconduct issue and refer to the Staff Code of Conduct to decide whether disciplinary action should be taken using the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair of Council who will decide whether disciplinary action is warranted and the next steps to take.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

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

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- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the concern must be shared with the Chair of Council who will liaise with the LADO.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The Education Lead will liaise with the Chair of Council and make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care enquiries. Advice can also be sought from the LADO.
- Irrespective of the findings of the SPA Team or Police enquiries the Education Lead/Chair of Council 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, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Education Lead and Chair of Council must reach a decision based on the available information which could suggest that on 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.

APPENDIX 2: Categories of Abuse

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.

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.

Reviewed by the Council of Management on 20th September 2016

Discussed with Rainer Klocke on 28th September 2016

Updated 29th September 2016 and 18th November 2016 by Diana Ball (Designated Safeguarding Lead)