

Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

Introduction

Fairley House School is committed to safeguard children, work to prevent abuse and neglect, protect children from harm, identify and report concerns about child abuse as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Article 19. We are aware of and follow the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters (ECM) programme outlined in The Children's Plan. We are committed to achieving the five desirable outcomes in ECM:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

We are committed to interagency working to safeguard children, as set out in the 2006 documents *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*. Staff had training on the key points in these documents in January 2008. The Principal as Child Protection officer had training from the Westminster Local Safeguarding Children's Board in Autumn 2007 and the policy is compliant with Westminster inter-agency procedures. The Principal also completed the NCSL Safer Recruitment certified training in July 2009 and has attended further Safeguarding training on the Independent Safeguarding Authority in March 2010. Staff, pupils and parents have had training on safe use of the internet in April 2010.

An important part of safeguarding is following the guidelines set out in the 2007 document *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*.

We recognise that as a school we have close and regular contact with children and are therefore in a position to notice signs of abuse. All our pupils have special educational needs (SEN) and we recognise that children with SEN may be especially vulnerable to abuse (DfEE Circular 10/95 *Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Education Service*).

We recognise that we have a duty of care towards children which includes contributing, with parents and other agencies to:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully

Definitions

Abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional. Abuse may be acute or a long term pattern of neglect. Children may be abused in more than one way. 'A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.' (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006*)

Signs of abuse

The following indicators are adapted from the NSPCC course, 'Child Protection Awareness in Education'.

Neglect

- Unusually hungry, perhaps stealing food
- Frequently absent from school or late
- Mentions being left alone at home or unsupervised
- Unkempt, dirty and or smelly
- Underweight or losing weight
- Few friends
- Parents do not keep medical appointments
- Not treated for illnesses or injuries
- Dressed inappropriately for the weather
- Often seems tired

Physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or injuries explained unconvincingly
- Injuries on cheeks, chest or thighs where accidental injuries are unlikely
- Injuries not treated or treated inadequately
- Bruising shows hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns or bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scald marks
- Reluctant for parent to be contacted by school staff
- Afraid to go home
- Unnaturally compliant with parent or carer
- Flinches when approached or touched
- Aggressive behaviour or extreme temper outbursts
- Depression or moods that are not consistent with child's usual behaviour
- Reluctant to change for PE etc
- Keeps arms and legs covered when hot

Sexual abuse

- Sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
- Sexualised drawings or language
- Allusion to having a secret that cannot be revealed
- Disclosing abuse
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Self harm or suicide attempts
- Drug or substance abuse
- Eating problems
- Reluctant to change for PE etc
- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal area
- Recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infection without medical explanation

Emotional abuse

- Failure to thrive
- Sudden speech anomalies
- Delayed development, physical or emotional
- Compulsive nervous behaviour such as rocking, twisting hair
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive fear of making mistakes
- Self harm
- Reluctant for parents to be contacted
- Excessive deference towards adults
- Extreme lack of confidence
- Extreme need for approval, attention, and affection
- Unable to accept praise

School Procedures and Practice

Awareness and ethos

- All staff members need to be aware of, and to follow, procedures on child protection. Awareness of the policy is included in induction of new staff.
- The school aims to create an ethos where children and parents feel valued, listened to and understood.
- Children are made aware through assemblies, PSHEE and the school's ethos that nobody has the right to hurt them and that their happiness and safety are important.

- The policy is posted on the school website so that it is available to all parents.

Personnel involved

- The Principal is the designated person responsible for Child Protection. In the event of her absence, the Heads of the Senior or Junior Department will act as the designated person. In the event of their mutual absence, one of the Senior Teachers or SENCOs will act. There is a Child Protection Governor, currently Ms Diana Hamilton Fairley, who was selected because of her medical background.
- Staff members are reminded that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility although the Principal takes the lead role.

Training

- The Principal and Governors are committed to ensuring that all the staff receives training on child protection.
- This is currently done by enrolling all new staff on the NSPCC distance learning course *Child Protection Awareness in Education*, published by EduCare. The advantage of using a distance learning course is that it is available whenever a new member of staff joins and there is no need to wait for training. Existing staff members have already completed the course. In December 2009 a new NSPCC Refresher course was trialled by 2 staff members for evaluation as a suitable way of keeping existing staff who have all had the original training, up to date. New staff members are enrolled on the initial NSPCC course as part of their induction, as well as being guided through the Safeguarding Policy by a Leadership Mentor. Supply staff are used rarely, but when used, undertake induction with the Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies before starting work in the class room. Supply staff contracted to work for more than half a term would be asked to complete NSPCC training. Staff are required to show evidence of successful completion of the NSPCC course by giving the office a photocopy of their certificate to be kept on file.
- Training for the Principal as Child Protection Officer is updated every 2 years. Training for the staff is updated at least every 3 years.

Addressing concerns

- Members of staff must report concerns about child welfare to the Principal or senior staff as soon as is practically possible, but **always within 24 hours if the concern is serious**. Concerns should be reported verbally and a record of concern completed by the teacher in writing. **Unexplained injuries should always be reported**. The record of concern will be kept in a confidential file to which only the Principal

and the School Secretaries have access. Confidentiality is important and secretaries would only access the file if requested to by the Principal for administrative purposes.

- If a child makes an allegation of abuse to a member of staff, a written record should be made of what they said as soon as is practically possible, dating and signing the record. If distressed, the child should be comforted or reassured and told that you will have to report what they said. **Reporting is non-negotiable and no false promises of confidentiality should be made. Children should not be asked leading questions about their allegations** since this could jeopardise a police investigation. **Children should be believed** and no judgements made until an investigation is carried out. The investigation will not be carried out by the school, but the school will co-operate fully with the investigating agencies.

Involving outside agencies

- The Principal will report concerns about child abuse or neglect to social services in the child's home area by telephone. Should social services be unavailable, any serious concerns will be reported to the police in the child's home area. It is not possible to maintain links with all the social services departments who could potentially be involved due to the school's wide catchment area with children coming from most London boroughs and even outside London. However, experience shows that contact details are readily obtained from the internet. The Principal will keep contemporaneous notes of telephone conversations. Referral will be followed up with a letter within 48 hours. A copy of the letter will be placed on the confidential Child Protection file, not on the child's individual file. If there is doubt about the need for reporting or further advice is required, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) in Westminster will be consulted for advice. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is Jane Foster, contact details below:

Westminster Safeguarding Children Board

LSCB 1st Floor, 4 Frampton Street London NW8 8LF Telephone: 020 7641 2311.
Fax: 020 7641 1608. Email: jfoster@westminster.gov.uk

- The Principal will attend Child Protection meetings, together with any other members of staff whose attendance is requested by social services. Staff members may be asked to provide a report on a child for a Child Protection meeting.
- The Principal is aware of the need to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) any safeguarding concerns regarding a member of staff, volunteer, student or contractor whose services are discontinued due to such concerns. This would include instances where the person concerned was dismissed by the school, their

contract was not renewed or they voluntarily withdrew. Contact details for the ISA are:

PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA

Telephone: 0300 123 1111. A report will be made by the Principal within one month of the person leaving.

Keeping staff informed

- All staff will be informed if a child is on the child protection register. Only details that are necessary for staff to safeguard the child's welfare will be shared due to the need to maintain confidentiality, particularly the content of child protection meetings. Details of any child protection matters relating to a particular pupil should not be discussed out of school to preserve confidentiality.

Vetting Adults Working with our Children

- The school follows procedures for safer recruitment of staff in accordance with Independent Schools Standards Regulations. Further details are in the Safer Recruitment Policy. All new members of staff and governors are checked by The Criminal Records Bureau, **even if they have been previously checked for employment by another school**. This check is a condition of employment. If the disclosure has not arrived from the CRB when it is time for the member of staff to start work, the CRB should be contacted to see if the process can be accelerated. The offer of a job is made subject to a satisfactory CRB check and so the appointment cannot be confirmed before the disclosure arrives. Staff may very occasionally start work before the disclosure is received, but the school must check to ensure they are not on the ISA barred list and their working in the school must be risk assessed with the risk assessment reviewed fortnightly. They would not have unsupervised access to children. This is not difficult to arrange given the high staff:pupil ratio and opportunities for joint working. Staff members are re-checked every 3 years. In 2011, once staff approval for working with children is placed online by the ISA, this will become unnecessary.
- **Anyone with frequent and intensive contact with children will be checked** in accordance with ISA Guidelines. Parents accompanying children on residential trips are CRB checked and cannot otherwise attend. Parents who have not been CRB checked could help on day trips as long as they do not have unsupervised access to children such as accompanying them to the toilet or taking a group by themselves. The school does not use parent volunteers for reading practice etc. Parent volunteers are used on a 'one off basis' to help with a specific trip or project. If parents help with art projects for the Christmas Fair etc they cannot have unsupervised access to children unless CRB checked. Student teachers and researchers cannot work or observe within the school without a CRB check.

- From January 2010 cleaners will be checked against the ISA barred list even though they do not have contact with children.
- The school requires confirmation from their employer that those working with our children outside school have been CRB checked e.g. swimming instructors, bus drivers.

Appropriate working practices

- Staff are reminded not to make themselves vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Conduct that could be misconstrued should be avoided. Staff must not give personal details such as mobile numbers, home telephone numbers or personal email addresses to pupils since it could be seen as 'grooming'. Staff should be careful not to provide personal details on social networking websites and should not communicate with children through social networking sites. Staff should be careful to leave the door open in one to one situations such as mentoring. Staff must not take pupils in their cars. Where children are being taken off site there should always be at least two members of staff present.
- If an incident has occurred between a staff member and a child that could be misconstrued, the incident should not be concealed by the staff member but reported to senior staff and logged in the Incident Book.
- Members of staff may work with children on a one to one basis as part of our assessment process or to provide individual teaching. Preferably the door should be left open. However, particularly during assessment, at times the door will be closed as an aid to concentration. It is part of the culture that members of staff will glance through the glass in the door when passing, in order both to prevent abuse and to protect colleagues from false allegations. Staff members are reminded not to obscure the glass.
- On residential trips, if a child will not settle to sleep, staff should avoid attending to the child for lengthy periods alone without other members of staff or children present.
- Staff entering bathrooms or toilets, at school or on trips, should knock and give warning of their intention to enter.
- Staff should not change or dress in the same room as children on residential trips or as part of games or similar activities.

Allegations against members of staff/volunteers

- If there is concern about the conduct of any adult working with children at or from FHS, it is vital that the concerns should be reported to the Principal. In the event of her absence the allegation should be passed

to the Chair of Governors. Avoiding 'whistle blowing' allows paedophiles to operate. (See Whistleblowing Policy).

- In the event of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, advice would be taken from outside agencies such as the police, social services or Westminster LSCB. If the allegation involved serious harm, the police would be informed immediately, not just consulted. Depending on the advice received and the seriousness of the allegation, a likely outcome is that he or she would be suspended on full pay pending a full and fair investigation of the matter. School will co-operate fully with any police or social services investigation. The reason for the suspension will not be made known to children and parents or the general public until the outcome of the investigation is known and then only if the allegations are proven or unless information enters the public domain. (See Media Communication Policy). If colleagues are informed of the reason for suspension they are asked not to discuss the matter out of school.
- If the allegation were against the Principal, the Chair of Governors would be informed without the Principal being forewarned and, if the allegation involved serious harm, police would be informed immediately. It is likely that the Chair of Governors and Child Protection Governor would work together on managing the situation.
- An allegation against a volunteer is unlikely given their extremely limited use at FHS. However, any allegation would be taken seriously, advice sought and the school would co-operate with any investigation or would investigate internally if appropriate. The person concerned would not be allowed to work at the school again unless any investigation had shown the allegations to be groundless

Safeguarding children who are using computers

- The internet can make children vulnerable to abuse or offer access to inappropriate material. The school provides training for pupils on safe use of the internet and of social networking sites. The school uses security software to prevent children viewing unsuitable material but it is not possible for everything to be screened out and staff members need to be vigilant when children are using laptops. Children are expected to agree not to seek out unsuitable material and parents are made aware of this expectation. The software produces a log of users who have attempted to access blocked sites and this is regularly reviewed by the IT department with contraventions reported to the Principal. Children know this is the case and this knowledge acts as a deterrent to inappropriate internet use.

Abuse of Children by Children

- The school is aware that it is possible for individual children or groups of children to abuse another child or children physically, emotionally and sexually and all staff will be vigilant in identifying, responding to and reporting any such incident. (See also anti bullying policy). In the event of such a report, the Principal would conduct an investigation and would contact parents of all children involved to inform them and to discuss necessary steps to take. Safeguarding Agencies e.g. LSCB would be approached for advice on how to proceed. Due regard should be given to the nature and seriousness of the abuse and the ages of the child/ren concerned.

Policy Review

- Governors are aware of the policy and review it annually. The Principal reports to the board on how effective procedures have proven over the year, preserving confidentiality regarding individual children and families. Should there be lessons to be learned, policy and practice would be changed immediately due to the high level of importance attached to safeguarding.
- When changes are made to the policy in response to review or changes in statutory requirements, the new version of the policy is emailed to all staff and brought to their attention in staff briefing.

J. Murray
October 2003

Reviewed by whole staff April 2007
Revised January 2008
Revised June 2009
Reviewed by Board of Governors July 2009
Revised December 2009

References

NSPCC and EduCare(2003) *Child Protection Awareness in Education*, de Brus Marketing Services Ltd.

(2003) *Every Child Matters* Green Paper

(2006) *Working Together to Safeguard Children** DfES

(2006) *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused** TSO

(2006) *Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Educational Settings** DfES

(2007) *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, DfES

<http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/> Information on the Independent Safeguarding Authority

Circular 10/95 (1995) *Protecting Children from Abuse: the Role of the Education Service*, DfEE, London, The Stationery Office.

(1989) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF.

* *Available in the staff rooms at the Junior and Senior Departments*