

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Holy Trinity Catholic School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school. The aim of the policy is to safeguard and promote our pupils' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance.

There are four main elements to our Child Protection Policy:

- Prevention (e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils;
- Protection (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns;
- Support (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused;
- Working with parents (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken).

This policy applies to **all** staff, governors and visitors to the school.

The school's designated child protection officer is Barry P Doran –head teacher

### **School Commitment**

The school adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of its responsibility for pastoral care. Staff hope that children and parents will feel free to talk about any concerns and will see school as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously and children are encouraged to seek help from members of staff.

Our school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE/Citizenship which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, and which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills;
- Ensure every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies;
- Operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children, including Criminal Record Bureau and List 99 checks.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within schools and

the LA who have specific responsibilities. The names of those carrying these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document. The Designated Person is a senior member of the school leadership team.

The role of the Designated Person for Child Protection includes:

#### Referrals

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies;
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- Liaise with Head Teacher/Principal (where role is not carried out by the Head Teacher) to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role.

#### Training

- To recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral;
- Have a working knowledge of how LSCBs operate, the conduct of a child protection case conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy especially new or part-time staff who may work with different educational establishments;
- Ensure all staff have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise;
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of referrals/concerns;
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years.

#### Raising Awareness

- Ensure the establishment's child protection policy is updated and reviewed annually, and work with the governing body/proprietor regarding this;
- Ensure parents see copies of the child protection policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later;
- Where children leave the establishment, ensure their child protection file is copied for new establishment as soon as possible, but transferred separately from main pupil file.

## **Head Teacher**

The Head Teachers of schools will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children;
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.

## **Governing Body**

Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring that:

- Their establishment has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with this guidance, and monitoring the school's compliance with them;
- Neither the governing body, nor individual governors, have a role in dealing with individual cases or a right to know details of cases (except when exercising their disciplinary functions in respect of allegations against a member of staff);
- There is an individual member of the governing body to champion child protection issues within the school, liaise with the Head Teacher about them, and provide information and reports to the governing body. However, it is not usually appropriate for that person to take the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the Head Teacher. That is more properly the role of the Chair of Governors or, in the absence of a Chair, the vice chair;
- Where the governing body acts collectively or an individual member takes the lead, it is helpful if all members of governing bodies undertake training about child protection to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities;
- In addition to basic child protection training, the designated person undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards agreed by, the LSCB, and refresher training at two-yearly intervals, to keep his/her knowledge and skills up-to-date, and provides advice and support to other staff;
- The Head Teacher, and all other staff who work with children, undertake appropriate training which is kept up-to-date by refresher training at three yearly intervals.
- Temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.

The nominated Governor for child protection is .....

Your attention is drawn to the fact that there is a procedure in Nottinghamshire for dealing with cases of revealed or suspected child abuse.

You are asked to inform yourself of the "Inter agency Guidance on the Assessment of Children in Need and the ACPCs Child Protection Procedures.

This is kept in the Head Teacher's office.

Please find enclosed a copy of Section 5 of the above guidance – Chapter 2. Criteria for Applying these Procedures and Definitions.

### 1 School Coordinator

The Child Abuse Coordinator is the Head Teacher. In his absence the Deputy Head Teacher will deputise by ensuring that the correct procedures are carried out.

School Governor Coordinator is

### 2 Disclosure

If a child begins to disclose details of abuse to you:

- a) Provide the greatest amount of privacy and confidentiality you can (this may entail your calling upon a colleague to supervise your class for a few minutes).
- b) Listen carefully.
- c) Reassure the child.
- d) Show that you believe them and want to help.
- e) DO NOT ask them to repeat what they have told you.
- f) Keep a discreet but accurate record of what they say.

Immediately after disclosure notify the Head Teacher who will then take charge of the situation. At this point the matter will be taken out of your hands but you are asked to observe strict confidentiality by not discussing the disclosure with any other child or adult. The whole matter should remain only the concern of you and the Head Teacher (who will follow the necessary procedure).

### 3 Suspicion

There are situations where you might suspect abuse but the child does not disclose the matter to you. In these cases you should:

- a) Make an accurate note of what you see.
- b) Inform the Head Teacher immediately.
- c) Do not discuss the matter with others.

### 4 Taking Action Yourself

In the unlikely event that neither the Head Teacher nor Deputy Head Teacher are obtainable, enlist the help of a senior colleague. If this is not possible you should follow the official procedure yourself.

### 5 Confidential Records

These are set up when there has been actual or suspected abuse. They are retained, even if abuse is not proved. Such records are kept in the Head Teacher's filing

cabinet. You will be notified if such records exist for any of your pupils and you may ask to see them. Strict confidentiality is to be observed at all times.

## 6 Communication of Information

Occasionally a seemingly trivial piece of information can complete a jigsaw of suspicion. It is important that all members of staff pass on information to a child's class teacher as it could be of greater importance than we think.

## 7 Informal Record Keeping

Teachers are advised to keep informal records of things they notice. Such jottings can be helpful in cases of abuse. There is a notebook in the head teacher's office that is used for writing; any unusual behaviour, comment from a child or unexplained marks or bruises etc.

## 8 Support for Staff

Disclosure can be traumatic for adults too. Counselling is available as it is often helpful to talk through such anxieties with someone who will respect all confidentiality.

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## CRITERIA FOR APPLYING THESE PROCEDURES AND DEFINITIONS

### KEY POINTS:

- **Criteria:** This chapter outlines that these procedures apply to all children whether they are only temporarily resident in Nottingham/shire as well as those who live here permanently. They apply regardless of whether or not there is a relationship between the child and perpetrator and to acts of commission or omission by the child's parents.
  - **Definitions:** of categories of abuse that are used.
  - **Recognition:** recognising abuse and on determining whether it constitutes significant harm. It also considers the impact of harm on children.
- 2.1 These procedures apply to all children under 18, as well as to unborn children about whom there is concern that they may be at risk of harm at birth. They apply to children who live permanently in Nottingham or Nottinghamshire and to those who are temporarily resident.
- 2.2 Children may be abused, or placed at risk of harm, in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. These procedures apply in all of these circumstances. When a child is involved in child sexual exploitation or substance misuse a decision will need to be made whether or not the case should be handled within the child protection procedures. This decision will be influenced by whether the involvement in substance misuse or sexual exploitation is encouraged by a child's carer or caused by their failure to prevent it.
- 2.3 These procedures apply to parents/carers acts of both omission, failing to act to prevent harm, and commission, abusing or neglecting a child by inflicting harm.

### Definitions

- 2.4 **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 in a child who they are looking after (Factitious Disorder).
- 2.5 **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child which causes 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 to a child, though it may occur alone.

See emotional abuse information section to be included in practice guidance for more detailed information about emotional abuse.

- 2.6 **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.
- 2.7 **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.

### **Recognising Abuse: General Considerations**

- 2.8 Child abuse occurs to children of both sexes and all ages, in all cultures, religions, and social classes and to children with and without disabilities. All professional groups and agencies should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk or significant harm. (See own agency internal practice guidance).
- Identification of child abuse may be difficult, it normally requires both medical and social assessment
  - Different types of child abuse may be present at the same time, e.g. a child who is being sexually abused may also be being physically abused. When enquiring into one type of abuse staff need to be alert to potential signs of other abuse
  - Always listen carefully to the child – pay particular attention to any spontaneous statement. In the case of children without speech or with limited language, pay attention to their signing or other means of expression, including behaviour and play
  - Any delay in seeking medical assistance or indeed none being sought at all, could be an indicator of abuse
  - Beware if explanation of an accident is vague, lacking detail, is inconsistent with the injury, or varies with each telling
  - Take note of inappropriate responses from parents or carers
  - Observe the child's interaction with the parents – particularly wariness, fear or watchfulness

- Any history or patterns of unexplained injury/illness requires the most careful scrutiny. The fact that the parent/carer appears to be highly attentive and concerned should not divert attention from the assessment of risk
- Beware if the child's injury is inconsistent with the child's development and mobility
- Beware if there are indications of or a history of domestic violence. Violence towards adults may also indicate violence towards children and can itself be experienced as emotionally abusive
- Children who are being abused often do not say. This is particularly so for children who are being emotionally abused and tend to perceive themselves as deserving of ill-treatment.

### **Significant Harm**

2.9 There are no absolute criteria to rely on when deciding what constitutes significant harm. Deciding whether a child has been significantly harmed is a judgment based on consideration of the:

- Nature of the abuse
- The effects of the abuse on the individual child

This judgment is founded on research, experience and full understanding of all three dimensions of the assessment framework.

2.10 In order to decide how severe the harm is, the following factors should be considered:

- The degree and extent of physical harm. The sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health development and well-being
- The duration and frequency of abuse and neglect. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self image and self-esteem and on his or her future life
- The extent of premeditation
- The degree of threat and coercion, sadism and bizarre unusual elements particular in sexual abuse

Each of the above factors has been associated with more severe effects on the child and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child to recover from the ill-treatment.

2.11 To understand the significance of the harm, it is necessary to consider all the dimensions of the child's needs, in particular:

- The family context
  - The child's development within the context of their family and wider social and cultural environment
  - Any special needs which may affect the child's development or increase parenting responsibilities
  - The nature of the harm
  - The impact of the harm on the particular child's health and development
  - Strengths and weaknesses of parental care
- 2.12 Any potentially abusive incident has to be seen in context to assess the extent of harm to a child. It is not only the stressful events of abuse that have an impact, but also the context in which they take place. Often it is the interaction between a number of factors that serve to increase the likelihood or level or actual significant harm.
- 2.13 Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. violent assault, poisoning or suffocating. More often significant harm is a combination of significant events, both acute and long-term which adversely affect the child's physical and psychological developments.
- 2.14 For an individual child there may be factors that aggravate the harm caused to the child, and those that protect against harm. Relevant factors include the individual child's means of coping and adapting, support from a family and social network, and the impact of any interventions. The effects on a child are also influenced by the quality of the family environment at the time of the abuse and subsequent life events. An important point is that the way in which professionals respond has a significant bearing on subsequent outcomes.

### **Records**

Appropriate records and documentation will be kept securely and confidential on a need to know basis, separate from school records as outlined in the DfES circular 10.95 – Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service.

### **Checking adults in school**

All adults wanting to work in school will be required to fill in a form and have it checked by the CRB before they start. (Police Checked Ref: DfES 0780/202) In certain circumstances the headteacher can agree to an adult working in school whilst their form is in the process of being checked provided that they are supervised at all times by another adult who has been checked.

### **Allegations against members of staff**

If there is an allegation against a member of staff it will initially be dealt with by the Headteacher and the Chairman of Governors or in his or her absence the Vice Chairman of Governors. If the headteacher is accused then the Chairman of governors will deal with the complaint initially.

However, the allegations will be dealt with in line with the “Joint NEOST/Teacher Union Guidance on Education Staff and Child Protection: Staff Facing an Allegation of Abuse.”

All school policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children will be reviewed annually.