



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

ABBOTSFORD SCHOOL

This document is based upon Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board's (WSCB) model *child protection policy* November 2009 and is viewed in conjunction with WSCB's "*Keeping Children Safe & Healthy*" Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures Blue Book.

INTRODUCTION

Abbotsford School recognises the responsibility it has under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, staff at the school has a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to the appropriate agency, normally the appropriate Children's Team (Social Care).

This Policy sets out how the school's Council of Management discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

There are five main elements to our Policy:

PREVENTION through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils and the creation and maintenance of a whole school protective ethos.

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

PROCEDURES for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

SUPPORT TO PUPILS who may have been abused.

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Our Policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school. Teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, secretaries as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents may also contact the Council of Management.

1. PREVENTION

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children.

The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and information about who to turn for help;
- Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills.

1. COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT CHILD PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council of Management fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to child protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Appendix 3.

It will:

- designate a Council of Management member for child protection who will oversee the school's Child Protection Policy and practice and champion child protection issues;
- ensure an annual report is made to the Council of Management, and copied to the Education Child Protection Service, on child protection matters to include changes affecting Child Protection policy and procedures, child protection training received, the number of incidents/cases (no names) and child protection in the curriculum;
- ensure that this policy is annually reviewed, updated and copied to the Education Child Protection Service.

2. PROCEDURES

We will follow the procedures set out in the Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board "**Safeguarding Inter-Agency Procedures**" (Sky Blue Book).

In addition, staff and managers in our school must 'have regard' to the guidance issued in '**Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education**' January 2007.

The Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection

The school will:

Ensure it has a designated senior member of staff (member of the leadership team) who has undertaken as a minimum, the two day child protection training course, accredited by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The designated child protection officers are Dominic Cook (Headteacher) and Jane Chatwin (Deputy Headteacher, Head, EYFS)

Ensure this training is updated every two years in accordance with Government guidance;

Recognise the importance of the role of the designated teacher and ensure s/he has the time and training to undertake her/his duties;

Ensure there are contingency arrangements should the designated member of staff not be available;

Ensure that the designated member of staff will take advice from a child protection specialist when managing complex cases (e.g. Education Safeguarding Children Manager).

Ensure that the designated member of staff is responsible for coordinating action where it is suspected that a child is in need, has been harmed, or is at risk of significant harm.

Ensure they are familiar with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and DfES guidance (Ref. 2.1).

Ensure child protection records are maintained.

The Role of School Staff

The school will:

Ensure every member of staff knows:

- the name of the designated person(s) and her/his role;
- that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels (school/education support service procedure – Appendix 1) and within the timescales set out in the Inter-Agency procedures.
- Where the Inter-Agency procedures and school/education support service Child Protection procedures are located;

Provide training for all staff from the point of their induction, and updated every three years (minimum half day/3 hours), so that they know:

- their personal responsibility;
- the local procedures;
- the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse;
- how to support and to respond to a child who tells of abuse.

Ensure that all staff and volunteers recognise their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed policies.

Liaison with Other Agencies

The school will:

Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance and written reports at initial case conferences, core groups and child protection review conferences.

Notify the local Children's Team (Social Care) if:

- it should have to exclude a pupil with a Child Protection Plan (whether fixed term or permanently);
- there is an unexplained absence of a pupil with a Child Protection Plan of more than two days duration from school (or one day following a weekend); or as agreed as part of any child protection or core group plan.
- They are concerned about the welfare of any child with a Child Protection Plan

Record Keeping

The school will:

Keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care immediately;

Keep records in a folder in a meticulous chronological order- model recording folder available from Warwickshire Safeguarding Board.

Ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;

Ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school, college or other education establishment when a pupil moves.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager or outside agency as required (e.g. Education Safeguarding Children Manager).

The Headteacher or designated teacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child/parent to keep secrets.

Communication with Parents

The school will:

Undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this. (Further guidance on this can be found in the Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Child Protection procedures, Section 3).

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 school brochure. (Suggested wording to be included in the school brochure can be found at the Education Child Protection Service) – see Appendix 2.

3. SUPPORTING THE PUPIL AT RISK

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.

This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element of the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

We recognise that some children actually adopt abusive behaviours and that these children must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

The content of the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.

The school ethos which (i) promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, (ii) gives pupils a sense of being valued;

The school's behaviour policy. This is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on the behaviour of the offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self worth. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;

Liaison with other agencies which support the pupil such as Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Service and the Education Social Work Service;

A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in a pupil's best interest to do so;

Recognition that children living in a home environment where there is a domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse are vulnerable and in need of support and protection;

Vigilantly monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and notifying Social Care **as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.**

When a pupil with a Child Protection Plan leaves, information will be transferred to the new school immediately. The Independent Reviewing Officers Manager will also be informed. Where the child's destination is unknown, the 'Missing Children' procedures must be followed. (Obtained from Principal Education Social Worker).

Drug Use and Child Protection

The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs or reported evidence of their drug use is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse;
- to believe the pupil's drug related behaviour is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults;
- where the misuse is suspected of being prompted by serious parent/carer drug misuse.

Children of Drug Using Parents

Further enquiries and/or further action will be taken when the school receives reliable information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- the parental misuse is regarded as problematic (i.e. multiple drug use including injection);

- a chaotic and unpredictable home environment exists which can be attributed to drug or alcohol misuse;
- children are not being provided with acceptable or consistent levels of social and health care;
- children are exposed to criminal behaviour.

4. PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH CHILDREN

The school will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate CRB and reference checks are undertaken according to the DfES document 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, January 2007'.

The school will consult with the Education Safeguarding Children Manager in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and adhere to the relevant procedures set out in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, the Allegations Against Staff Procedure and the school's Personnel Manual (i.e. the manual produced by WES Personnel for subscribing schools).

The school will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the school and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.

The school will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents as advised by the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

The school will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of position of trust).

5. OTHER RELATED POLICIES

6.1 Physical Intervention

Our Policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the Council of Management. We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimum force necessary to prevent injury to themselves, another person or property.

6.2 Bullying

Our Policy on bullying including cyber bullying is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the Council of Management. We acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

6.3 Racist Incidents

Our Policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the Council of Management. We acknowledge that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

6.4 Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, is reviewed annually by the Council of Management. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

6.5 Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

We recognise that statistically children with behaviour difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems are particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

6.6 Curriculum

The 'Safeguarding Children' consultation document which resulted in updated guidance relating to protecting children from abuse and which came into effect at the same time as Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in June 2004 states that:

The non-statutory framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) provides opportunities for children and young people to learn about keeping safe; and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle pupils should be taught, for example:

- To recognise and manage risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly;
- To judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable;
- To recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being and develop effective ways of resisting pressure; including knowing when and where to get help;

6.7 E-Safety

Our e-safety policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Council of Management. It reflects that e-safety is not an ICT issue it is a safeguarding issue and that we need to balance keeping children safe with allowing them the freedom to explore new technologies. Through our policy we intend limiting the risks that young people are subject to. Because it is a rapidly developing and moving issue the governors will review this policy on a regular basis.

6.8 Allegations against Staff (including Whistleblowing Policy)

The Council of Management has adopted the Local Authority document on Allegations against staff including whistleblowing policy. In addition, the school follows the procedure laid out in the Warwickshire local safeguarding children board 'Safeguarding Interagency procedures' (Sky Blue Book).

6.9 Attendance

We recognise that full attendance at school/college is important to the well-being of all our pupils and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them from our school/college. Attendance is monitored closely and we work closely with the education social work service when the patterns of absence are of concern. Our attendance policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Council of Management.

6.10 Staff Conduct

The Council of Management has adopted the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings March 2009. The practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid and unpaid capacities in all settings and all contexts.

6.11 Behaviour Management

Our behaviour policy is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Council of Management. This policy is transparent to staff parents and pupils.

6.12 Extended Schools and Before and After School Activities

(Ref: Warwickshire Extended Services: Implementing the Vision)

If the Council of Management provides extended school facilities or before or after school activities directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for child protection as written in this Policy shall apply.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body the Council of Management will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

6.13 Forced Marriage there is a clear distinction between forced marriage and arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage the choice, whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. In forced marriage one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It is important that staff are made aware of these issues and are clear on what they are to do should a case arise. The [school/college/children's centre], follows the multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage which can be downloaded at www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage.

Ratified by the Council of Management on 2.3.2010

APPENDIX 1

Making a Referral.

See also:

- Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board – Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures (Sky Blue Book)
- DfES Guidance “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education”

General Considerations:

All concerns about the welfare of children and young persons, disclosures of possible abuse and observations of behaviour or injury which cause concern, must be taken seriously and reported within these procedures and those of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board.

All education staff share the responsibility of ensuring that concerns about children “in need” and those “in need of protection” are brought to the attention of the responsible person/agency in order that they may be investigated within the appropriate procedures.

Central education staff who visit different schools and educational settings should acquaint themselves with the school’s policy and procedures and the identity of the designated teacher for each establishment. Normally a referral for a child in that school should only be made in consultation with the designated teacher, (unless it is out of hours, an emergency or a school holiday).

Procedure

Every case of possible child abuse or risk of “significant harm” identified within the establishment/service must be reported to the designated person without delay (matters should never go unreported overnight).

It is the designated person’s responsibility to decide whether there should be an immediate referral to Children’s Services or the Police, further discussion with colleagues outside the school or an agreement to monitor the child. (See Section 3 of Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Procedures for contact details).

In rare cases of serious physical injury, it may be necessary to arrange immediate medical treatment for the child. An ambulance should be called and, where necessary, the child will be taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of a hospital. The suspicion of abuse must be made known by the person accompanying the child.

[Note: the responsibility for the medical investigation of significant harm lies with the Community Physician [Child Protection].]

Once the decision has been taken to make a referral, the designated teacher or their deputy will contact the Children’s Services team (where the abuse took place). If the child lives outside Warwickshire, use the procedures for that Local Authority.

The Duty Officer will note the referral and confirm with the Duty Team Manager what action will be taken. **If you do not receive a response, seek clarification from the Duty Team Manager.**

The designated person will need to agree what action should be taken for the immediate support of the child. This should include what time the child or young person will be going home and with whom. It is important that there is a clear understanding about how the parents or carers are to be informed of the referral and by whom. A written note of the agreements reached should be kept by the referrer.

The appropriate member of staff (possibly the member of staff originally involved) should continue to support the child in accordance with the plan agreed with the Duty Officer.

The Confirmation of Referral Form must be completed within 24 hours by the designated teacher or their deputy. If all the information is not immediately available, this should not delay the form being sent. Give as much detail as possible as this will help them to cross-reference the referral with other information held by other agencies and reach a decision about appropriate action. The form may be faxed or posted to the Children's Team. The educational setting making the referral should keep a copy and forward a copy to the Education Safeguarding Children Manager.

A referral may result in:

- no action;
- an assessment under Section 17 for Family Support Services; ('a child in need') with parents' consent;
- acceptance of a referral under Section 47 for a Child Protection investigation; ('a child suffering from or at risk of suffering from significant harm');
- further investigation before a decision can be made.

A Strategy discussion may be called. It is normally expected that representatives from schools or other educational settings will be involved where they are the referrer. When the referral does not result in a Child Protection investigation or a Conference after an SC1 has been sent, the referrer should be notified of this decision and the reason for it given in writing. **If you remain concerned for a child's safety when a previous referral has been closed, or if there has been no response, refer the case again or ask to speak to a senior manager.**

When an Initial Conference is called, the designated person should be invited. This will often be at short notice and should be held within 15 days of the Strategy discussion or initial referral. Attendance at conferences should be regarded as a very high priority and will be monitored. The representative at the conference will be expected to share background information related to the case (it is recommended as good practice that a report is prepared prior to the conference). In addition they will be expected to determine the risk factors that place the child(ren) at risk of significant harm.

APPENDIX 2

Suggested wording for information on Child Protection to be included in School* Prospectus

Schools are strongly advised to inform parents/carers of their child protection procedures and the requirements to report concerns to Social Care. The following information can be used in the school's brochure:

'Under the Education Act 2002 (Section 175), schools must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Parent/carers should know that the law (Children Act 1989) requires all school staff to pass on information which gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, including risk from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. The staff will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the parent/carer, and where possible, seek their consent to a referral to Social Care. This will only be done where such discussion will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm. Schools will seek advice from Social Care when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Occasionally, concerns are passed on which are later shown to be unfounded. Parents/carers will appreciate that the designated person for child protection was carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and acting in the best interests of all children.'

* The word 'school' is used throughout but this would include all educational settings e.g. Teaching and Learning Centres, Further Education establishments and Independent schools.

APPENDIX 3**Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools**

Child protection matters are receiving an increased priority in Ofsted and ISI inspections. The following standards may assist schools in evaluating their practice. This should be used jointly by the Designated Child Protection person, Designated Council of Management member for Child Protection to ensure the school is effective in child protection matters.

In best practice, schools:

1. Have an ethos in which children feel secure, the viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
2. Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
3. Work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
4. Are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
5. Monitor children who have been identified as at risk, *in a secure place*, clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting report to case conferences and attending case conferences;
6. Provide and support child protection training regularly to school staff every three years and in particular to designated teachers every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date, and ensure that targeted funding for this work is used solely for this purpose;
7. Contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
8. Use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, taking into account of the guidance for Governors on sex and relationship education in circular 5/94;
9. Provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the schools approach to bullying;
10. Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying – physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the schools position on this issue and who they can contact for support;

11. Take particular care that pupils with SEN in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills;
12. Have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance set out in the DfES document Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education;
13. Have a written Whole School Policy, produced, owned and regularly reviewed by schools staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards;
14. The school will ensure that specified information is passed on in a timely manner to the Local Authority for monitoring purposes.
15. The school must have a Single Central Record in place that fully complies with guidance (Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Jan 2007) from the DCSF Secretary of State.

Reference Documents

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (Jan 07) – DCSF

Working Together to Safeguard Children

For copies and further assistance, please contact:

John Sullivan
Education Safeguarding Children Manager
Tel: 01926 74 2526

Ann Seal
Taking Care Manager
Tel: 01926 742523

Sophie Morley
Administrative Officer
Tel: 01926 74 2601