

Badshot Lea Village Infant School

Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement

Introduction

The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements exist within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

We recognise that all adults, staff, volunteers and Governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. 'Staff' covers ALL adults on site whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Our philosophy is that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Aims of our Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy

1. To support children's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
2. To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, respected, feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.
3. To include opportunities within the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
4. To raise awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
5. To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm and to contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
6. To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all staff.
7. To develop a structured procedure which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
8. To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, particularly the Police and Social Services.
9. To ensure that all adults who have access to children attending our school have been checked as to their suitability using safe recruitment principles.

Procedures

Our school will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). We will ensure that:

1. All members of the Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities and nominate a Governor responsible for Child Protection.
2. Our school has a designated member of staff (Child Protection Liaison Officer - CPLO) who has received appropriate training and support for this role, and that member of staff is known to all adults working in the school.
3. A senior member of staff, acting as the designated CPLO in their absence, has also received appropriate training.
4. All members of staff receive appropriate Child Protection Awareness Raising training to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
5. All members of staff, volunteers and Governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the CPLO.
6. All parents / carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to Child Protection procedures through publication of this policy in our Induction Pack for new parents and on our School Website.
7. We notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence for two days of a child on the Child Protection Register.
8. We develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding Child Protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
9. Written records of concerns about children, even when there is no need to refer the matter immediately, are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file.
10. All adults working with children at our school have been appropriately checked for suitability.
11. Community users and external providers organising activities for our children are aware of our Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement and have been appropriately checked for suitability.
12. Our selection and recruitment of staff includes checks for their suitability with the Criminal Records Bureau, ensuring safe recruitment practices are always followed.
13. Any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the appropriate bodies.
14. Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Our school procedures will be reviewed annually.

The Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) will be the Headteacher.

All new members of staff will be given a copy of our Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement together with the booklet 'What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused'.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

1. Ensuring there is a Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement in place, and it is made available to parents on request.
2. Operating safe recruitment procedures making sure all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and volunteers including Criminal Record Bureau.
3. Having procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
4. Ensuring a senior member of staff is designated to take the lead responsibility with Child Protection issues.
5. Ensuring the Headteacher, and all other staff (including Governors), undertake appropriate training, that is kept up to date, to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for Child Protection effectively.
6. Ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to Child Protection arrangements that are brought to their attention are addressed without delay.
7. Nominating a member of the Governing Body to be responsible for liaising with the LA or partner agencies as appropriate in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher.
8. Reviewing the Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement annually.
9. Recognising the contribution the school can make to helping children keep safe through the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum.
10. Ensuring that there is a safe and effective Recruitment Policy, alongside disciplinary procedures which adhere to The Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) Regulations 2003, as amended.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

1. Putting in place procedures for handling cases of suspected abuse (including allegations against staff and volunteers) which are consistent with those agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
2. Co-ordinating Child Protection action and referrals within the school and acting as a source of advice.
3. Ensuring that all staff know and are alert to signs of possible abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns or suspicions through training.
4. Making parents aware of the Children Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement.
5. Working with external partners to create a safe school environment for children.
6. Taking the role of Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO).

The Child Protection Liaison Officer is responsible for:

1. Referring a child if there are concerns of suspected abuse, or allegations, to the Children's Services Assessment Team, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. A written record of referral will be sent to the Children's Service Assessment Team and the Development Manager for Welfare and Protection as soon as is reasonably practical following a telephone referral.
2. Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.

3. Ensuring all records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records.
4. Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil record.
5. Providing information to receiving schools on all matters concerning Child Protection.
6. Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
7. Ensuring that they, or the class teacher, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
8. Having a working knowledge of, and contribute to, Child Protection procedures.
9. Acting as a source of support and advice.
10. Ensuring that any pupil currently on the Child Protection Register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
11. Organising Child Protection training for all school staff.
12. Ensuring the Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement is up-dated annually.
13. Ensuring parents and carers have access to the Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy Statement.
14. Providing an annual report for the Governing Body detailing any changes to the Child Protection (Safeguarding Children) Policy, training and the number of children on the Child Protection Register.

Disclosure

A child may confide in any member of staff, volunteer helper or Governor. Adults to whom a disclosure is made should remember to:

- listen, do not interrupt the child if they are freely recalling significant events;
- take what they say seriously;
- try not to show any shock you might feel;
- stay calm and reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- not make promises of what might or might not happen next;
- not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality;
- not lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator;
- frame any questions that may be needed to clarify what the child is saying in an open manner;
- explain what will happen next and who you need to talk to;
- make a note of the discussion, and diagrams of bruising or marks, as soon as is reasonably practicable and certainly within twenty four hours to pass on to the CPLO, recording the time, date, place and people who were present and what was said. This may be used in subsequent court proceedings;
- inform the CPLO as soon as is reasonably practical.

It is not the responsibility of teachers, other staff, volunteers or Governors in school to investigate suspected abuse. Action should not be taken beyond that agreed in the procedures established by our Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Supporting Children

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of worth.

We recognise that our school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support pupils by:

1. Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
2. Promoting a caring, safe, supportive, positive and secure environment within the school giving pupils a sense of being valued.
3. Ensuring that vulnerable pupils know that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
4. Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
5. Notifying the Assessment Team as soon as there is a significant concern.
6. Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school, by ensuring that appropriate information, including medical records, is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school, as a matter of priority.

Looked After Children

Children who are 'looked after' should have their own Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up by the Social Worker in discussion with school staff, foster parents and where possible the child themselves.

The Child Protection Register

Children placed on the Child Protection Register will require additional support and monitoring.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential and the CPLO will disclose any information about a child 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 to keep a secret which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Adults should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed and that it will be for the child's own safety or wellbeing. Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively. Adults should listen sympathetically whilst not being judgemental.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Services with their parents / carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Duty Manager at the Assessment Team.

Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the CPLO and to seek further support as appropriate.

Allegations against Staff

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

All staff should be aware of Surrey's Guidance on Behaviour Issues, and our school Behaviour Policy.

We understand that a child may make an allegation against a member of staff. The member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher, who will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Education Officer, or in their absence the Development Manager Welfare and Protection. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult the Local Education Officer, without notifying the Headteacher first.

The school will follow the Surrey procedures for managing allegations against staff. Under no circumstances will a child be sent home pending an investigation unless this advice is given exceptionally as a result of a Strategy Meeting.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration. The Headteacher will seek advice from the Local Education Officer and Personnel Consultant. In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice from the Local Education Officer and Personnel Consultant.

The suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation will be decided by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff will be made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of Child Protection which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Physical Intervention

Staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort when a child is endangering themselves or others. At all times it must be the minimal physical intervention necessary to prevent injury to another person. Physical interventions should be recorded, dated and signed by a witness. Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention may be trained in the Positive Options technique. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under Child Protection or disciplinary procedures.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are: physical; verbal; and emotional. All incidents of bullying will be dealt with by the class teacher, followed by the Headteacher as appropriate. (Please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy Statement). We acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures.

Racist Incidents

We acknowledge that to allow or condone a racist incident may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

1. Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
2. Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
3. Include cross-curricular opportunities to equip children with the skills they need to keep safe from harm.

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children within the school environment and when away from the school site on visits.

This version reviewed: Autumn 2009

Next review: Autumn 2010

Signed: *Original Signed*

Date: *27th November 2009*

On behalf of the Governing Body

Appendix

Guidance on Recognising Suspected Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate authority.

The health, safety, welfare and protection of a child is paramount.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child. Possible signs of physical abuse include:

- unexplained injuries or burns;
- refusal to discuss injuries;
- improbable explanations of injuries;
- untreated injuries or illness;
- admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- shrinking from physical contact;
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted;
- fear of undressing;
- fear of medical help;
- aggression or bullying;
- over compliant behaviour;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- deterioration in work;
- unexplained pattern of absences.

Emotional Abuse

This is persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It can include: conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved; placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children; making children feel frightened or in danger on a frequent basis. Possible signs of emotional abuse include:

- continual self-deprecation;
- fear of new situations;
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;
- self-harm or mutilation;
- compulsive stealing or scrounging;
- drug or solvent abuse;
- 'neurotic' behaviour including obsessive rocking or thumb-sucking;
- air of detachment 'don't care' attitude;
- social isolation;
- attention-seeking behaviour;
- eating problems;

- depression or withdrawal.

Sexual Abuse

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. They can include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Possible signs of sexual abuse include:

- bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks;
- scratches, abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions;
- pregnancy;
- sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age;
- frequent public masturbation;
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity;
- refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places;
- aggressiveness, anger, anxiety or tearfulness;
- withdrawal from friends.

Neglect

Neglect is a form of abuse. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment. Possible signs of neglect include:

- constant hunger;
- poor personal hygiene;
- inappropriate clothing;
- frequent lateness or non-attendance;
- untreated medical problems;
- low self-esteem;
- poor social relationships;
- compulsive stealing or scrounging;
- constant tiredness.