



Sutton Oak C.E Primary School

Goodban Street, Sutton, St Helens, WA9 3QD

Child Protection Policy

2016



Believe, Achieve and Grow Together

SUTTON OAK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL – POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

Child abuse takes a variety of forms:

- Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. This includes non-contact situations, such as showing children pornography.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see to the emotional well-being of the child.

In our school, we respect our children. Through following our core Christian Values the ethos within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best whilst feeling safe and secure. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.

We recognise that abuse and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.

Our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship, as part of the National Curriculum and in line with Diocesan guidelines, helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children, and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

This policy is based on DfES Circular 10/95 – Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 introduced a new duty requiring governing bodies and Las to have appropriate child-protection procedures in place. This policy takes account of the requests set out in the Children Act 2004.

This policy is also underpinned by the following key documents:

“Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges”
DfE 2016

“Working together to safeguard children” DfE 2016

Aims and objectives

Our aims are:

- To provide a safe, caring Christian environment for children to learn in
- To establish what actions the school can take to ensure that children remain safe, at home as well as at school;
- To raise the awareness of all staff to these issues, and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse
- To identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- To ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues
- To set down the correct procedures for those who encounter any issue of child protection.

Staff responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure all of the following:

- That the governing body adopts appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children in the school
- That these policies are implemented by all staff
- That sufficient resources and time are allocated for staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively
- That all staff and adult helpers in the school are able to voice their concern if they feel that a child is vulnerable, or that there are any particular practices that are unsafe.

There is a named person Designated Senior Person as the Child Protection Coordinator.

At Sutton Oak CE Primary these are Mr I Williams (Headteacher), Mrs C Hill (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs A Bradshaw (Pastoral Manager)

Mrs M Hyland is the Safeguarding Link Governor.

The coordinator is guided by two principles:

In accordance with the Children Act, the welfare of the child is always paramount
Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

A key role of the Coordinators is to be fully conversant with the procedures of the Area child Protection Committee (ACPC), and to ensure that the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The Coordinators must also make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The Coordinators will work closely with Social Services, as well as the ACPC, when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved with handle such investigations in sensitive manner, remembering all the time that **the interests of the child are of paramount importance.**

Headteacher/Designated Persons

They are responsible for:

Co-ordinating action with the school and liaising with Social Care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse

- Acting as a source of advice within the school
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures
- Referral of individual cases of suspected abuse
- Liaising with agencies about individual cases
- Organising training on child protection within school

Where verbal referrals are made to social care, the referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Teaching staff and support staff

New teachers and supply staff are informed of the main points of this child protection policy through the induction process and our safeguarding leaflets.

All staff need to be alert to the signs of abuse as details in this policy. They should report any concerns immediately, where possible to the designated teacher or his/her deputy. If in any doubt they should consult with the designated teacher.

All staff apply the procedures detailed below for responding to a suspected case remembering that:

- You cannot promise confidentiality
- Information should only be shared with those who need to know
- It is important to stay calm reassuring
- The needs and safety of the child must always come first
- When in doubt – ask

Non-teaching staff

Non-teaching staff may also be approached by children or have concerns. They should follow the same procedure as teaching staff in seeking referral at the earliest opportunity to the designated teacher or their deputy where appropriate.

Employment and Recruitment

We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with children in our school are suitable people. This involves scrutinizing applicants, verifying their identity and obtaining references, as well as the mandatory check of List 99 and CRB checks. We follow the DfEs guidance set out in Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Services, DfEs 2002/0278.

Procedure to be followed if an adult has concerns about a child

Any action taken by the named Child Protection Co-ordinators when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in accordance with the procedures outlined in the LA's Child Protection guidelines.

All adults in our school share the responsibility of keeping our children safe. We may on occasion report concerns which, on investigation, prove unfounded. If teachers suspect that a child in their class may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should immediately inform the Child Protection Co-ordinators about their concerns. Abuse can be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature. It can also be the result of neglect. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them; they are required by law to pass this information on.

If a child alleges abuse, the school will usually make a referral to the LA without first informing parents. However, in some circumstances parents will be informed first.

If a referral is made, a case conference will be held within eight working days. Case conferences offer the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held.

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 may not be our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. **The health, safety and protection of a child is paramount.**

Physical Abuse

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

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Improbable explanations of injuries
- Untreated injuries or lingering 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/bullying
- Over compliant behaviour
- Running away
- 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/scrounging
- Drug/solvent abuse
- 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb sucking
- Air of detachment 'don't care' attitude
- Social isolation
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems
- Depressions, 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, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible signs 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, tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends

Neglect

Neglect is also 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 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

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Emotional

All incidents of bullying should be dealt with by the class teacher in the first instances, followed by year leader and/or Headteacher as appropriate. A more detailed guide can be found in the school's anti-bullying policy.

Self Harm

If it comes to the attention of a teacher/member of staff that a child is self-harming they should alert the designated teacher for child protection. Actions by the designated teacher might include:

- Contacting parent
- Contacting Child Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Contacting Social Care if the child meets the referral criteria

Physical Restraint

There may be times when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain children and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention will always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation. We follow the guidance given in the DfEs circular 10/98 on The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. The headteacher will require the adult(s)

involved in any such incident to report the matter to him or her immediately, and to record it in the Physical Interventions File using the Local Authority Forms. These are then sent in to the Local Authority.

Allegations against staff

If an allegation is made against a member of the school staff (or a volunteer helper), it will always be investigated by the headteacher, or, in the case of the allegation being against the headteacher, by the chair of the governing body. If it is felt, after these initial investigations, that a further enquiry is needed, then the member of staff will be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. However, it is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the school will do all it can to balance the interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe. The school will seek advice from the LA on these matters, and comply with national and locally agreed guidance.

Staff training

All adults in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse, and to improve their knowledge of the child protection procedures that have been agreed locally. The maximum period of time before refresher training must take place is two years. All staff complete the On-line Safeguarding Training.

Staff are annually trained on Physical Intervention and this is only used as a last resort.

Confidentiality

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. We pass information on to appropriate persons only.

We comply with the government requirements set out in DHS Circular LA 83/14, and by the LA with regard to confidentiality. The files we keep on children are open to those children's parents. Information from third parties will not be disclosed without their prior consent. Access to these files may be withheld in certain prescribed cases where there are instances of actual or alleged abuse (see DfES Circular 16/19). Working notes are not subject to disclosure, but will be summarised and then kept on file. These guidelines of ours are in line with the safeguards on disclosure of information set out in the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.

Inter-agency liaison

Social Care meetings

- At times school staff will be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by social care. These might be:
- Strategy discussions
- The child protection review conference
- Child protection conferences
- Family group conferences – for children in need, in a range of circumstances where a plan is required for the child's future welfare
- Professionals meetings – in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support of making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement
- Core group meetings – meetings in which a 'core' group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews.

At these meetings, representatives from the school should be ready to report providing information about

- Attendance and punctuality
- Academic achievement
- The child's behaviour and attitude
- Relationships with peer groups and social skills generally
- Child's appearance and readiness for school
- Contact with parents/carers
- Any specific incidents that need reporting

Prior to the meeting, class teachers and other adults working closely with the child should be asked for their comments. Following the meeting feedback should be given and staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed.

The Child Protection Plan

In the case of children placed on the child protection plan who leave one school for another, the designated teacher must inform the receiving school, details should be passed to the Principal ESW.

Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed and that that will be for the child's own sake.

Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively. Reassurance should be given and the adult involved listen sympathetically and non-judgementally.

Staff should be careful and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Members of staff, other than the designated members and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on the child protection register is kept separately in a folder in the closed section of the office.

Discretion should be used when talking about the personal, and changing circumstances of children e.g. when a child goes into care. Care is particularly necessary after attending child protection meetings. Information received should be treated sensitively and discretion will be needed as issues emerge on a formal and informal basis.

Supporting children at risk

For children at risk, school may be the one stable place from which they can expect security and reassurance. It is not only being alert to potential abuse but providing the support to help children through difficult times. Providing them with the coping skills that can help avoid situations arising and deal with the emotional difficulties afterwards if they do.

The Personal Education Plan

Children who are 'looked after' should have their own Personal Education Plan (PEP) which will be drawn up in discussion with social care, the class teacher, foster parents and the child themselves.

Support in school – pastoral care

All class teachers and key stage leaders are responsible, in conjunction with other school staff, for the pastoral needs of the children in their care. This includes maintaining opportunity for children to share their concerns and following the guidance in this document.

Care should always be taken in regard to the discussion of sensitive issues and advice should be sought where there are concerns. The Pastoral Manager and Behaviour Support Worker have available a variety of resources to support pastoral care.

Support in school – the curriculum

Within our curriculum there will also be opportunities to discuss issues which some children might find sensitive and disturbing. Care should be taken particularly in relation to discussion about families and their make-up. Assumptions about members of families and the presence of both parents should be avoided both in discussion and the presentation of materials. During health and safety discussion and sex education staff should be alert to the fact that some children will have very different experiences and may find content sensitive with their own history. Staff should make themselves familiar with the background of the children in their care in order to avoid children becoming distressed.

Support in School – Pastoral Team

Children in care or on the Child in Need Continuum have access to our Pastoral Manager, Behaviour Support Worker and members of the Safeguarding Team.

Matrix of Vulnerability

The school has a detailed tracking system in place to ensure a co-ordinated approach for all our pupils.

CAF's

The school is pro-active in completing the Common Assessment Framework forms to ensure that the needs of our pupils are being met through a co-ordinated approach. These are now completed electronically. (E-CAF)

Monitoring and review

The governing body will ensure that the school has a senior member of staff designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues. Governors will regularly monitor and review any incidents, while a named governor participates in the school's training with regard to child protection procedures

This policy is reviewed annually or when required by the governing body.

Reviewed and Adopted by Governing Body November 2016

Signed *Mavis Hyland* **(Chair of Governing Body)**