

Child Protection Policy

Ethos

A key role of Sitwell Junior School is to ensure that all children feel safe and protected within the premises and community of school. The governors and staff, including volunteers, fully recognise the contribution they must make to safeguard children in their care.

Our primary responsibility is the safeguarding of individual children and any concerns about their emotional or physical well-being must be addressed appropriately. Having responsibility for children during a large part of every day, we are well placed to notice changes in appearance, behaviour and achievement; to confirm their welfare or to raise concerns.

Rationale

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999); the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005) and Keeping Children Safe In Education (April 2014).

The welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration. The 'paramount nature' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

The Safeguarding Team

Chair Of Governors: Mr Adrian Robinson

Designated Governor for Child Protection:

Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection:

Head Teacher/Child Protection Officer: Mr Jonathan Moody

Deputy Child Protection Officer: Miss Judith Gray

Looked After Children Teacher: Ms Sarah Sheldon

Common Assessment Frame team: Ms Sarah Sheldon; Mrs.Kirsty Parker; Mrs.Yasmeen Akhter

What is Child Abuse?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order)

Child Abuse occurs when 'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.'

Neglect

Actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger

- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing

Physical Abuse

Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

- Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:
- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to mark)
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Fear of going home

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

- Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

- Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:
- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Attention seeking
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or repeatedly over a period of time.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. They may give rise to concern but are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred.

Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse. Our anti-bullying policy is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. Staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully.

Any complaints by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be investigated by the Head Teacher and/or Designated Teacher for Child Protection and action will be taken to protect the victim. This may include ensuring that another child or a group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied in the playground. Staff will also monitor the situation on a regular basis. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include the loss of privileges in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures.

Procedures for Dealing with Cases of Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

In line with advice from DfE, the school will ensure that specific procedures are followed in the event of a member of staff becoming concerned about the abuse of a child. Emphasis will be placed on both early detection and swift intervention, but no member of the school's staff will investigate directly and signs of possible abuse will not be considered by the school as proof.

Detection/Disclosure

Members of staff may be informed by a child about abuse or become concerned as a result of observation or disclosure. If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the Designated Teacher.

Referral to Designated Teacher

Staff will act promptly in referring the concern to the Designated Teacher. Together they will discuss the concern and complete a Child Protection Incident Report.

Action Planning

The Designated Teacher meets with the Principal (or Chairperson of the Board of Governors in the absence of the Head Teacher) and an appropriate course of action is planned. A written record of decisions should be made.

Action

One or more of the following actions will be effected, as appropriate to the specific concerns:

- The teacher and/or Designated Teacher will talk further with the child in an attempt to reassure him/her and simply to clarify and record what has happened (this will not involve detailed investigation or interpretation and no promise of confidentiality will be given).
- The Designated Teacher, in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
- The Designated Teacher may seek clarification or advice and consult with the safeguarding team at Riverside House or a senior social worker before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

- Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Designated Teacher will make a telephone referral to the CART team followed by written verification via email.
- The CART team will be contacted if any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse remains.
- Any abuse that is ultimately confirmed will be followed up with support for the victim and an appropriate combination of discipline and support as advised by the confirming outside agency and agreed by the principal and governors.

Child Abuse Complaints Against Staff

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Head Teacher (or the Deputy designated adult if the Head Teacher is unavailable) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Head Teacher or Deputy). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors must be informed immediately. Together with the Deputy they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

Role of the Designated Teacher (DT)

- The Designated Teacher will:
- Promote a child protection ethos in the school
- Develop and update the school's child protection policy
- Ensure parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years
- Provide written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Be available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Be responsible for recordkeeping of all child protection concerns & maintain all records in a secure location
- Liaise with parents, when appropriate, over child protection issues
- Liaise with Rotherham Safeguarding Board
- Make referrals to Social Services
- Co-operate fully with any agency involved with the care of an individual child, compiling information and attending case conferences as required

The Deputy Designated Teacher will support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Record

Keeping

The rapport and positive professional relationship between teachers and children is a key factor in developing children's full potential and while teachers would not wish to damage such relationships, it will be explained to any child, about whom there is concern, that it may be necessary to pass information on to the Designated Teacher and perhaps other agencies. No promise of confidentiality can be given. Detailed records will be kept of all concerns and actions relating to suspicions of abuse. All notes will be written objectively, without speculation and immediately following any incident that they record.

In accordance with guidance from DfE, governors will receive termly updates on child protection and a formal report annually, which will include the following, with anonymity maintained:

- a report on the school's maintenance of child protection records, e.g. concerns of abuse, any referrals to social services, any complaints against staff
- child protection training
- policy review/update
- safeguarding initiatives

Staff

Conduct

Relationships between children and all staff are developed on trust and mutual respect. The Code of Conduct is known to all staff, teaching and non teaching, and reflects the safeguarding ethos of the school. It ensures that the recommended child protection procedures are followed with empathy and professionalism.

Parents & Child Protection

The Child Protection Policy will remain available to all parents via the school's website and will be distributed every two years. Advice will be given on procedures for reporting child abuse and a synopsis of the policy will be included in the school prospectus.

Parents are asked to supply the school with the names of all persons who have permission to collect their child from school (or to confirm that their child may leave the grounds unaccompanied). They are asked to inform the school of any change in this routine.

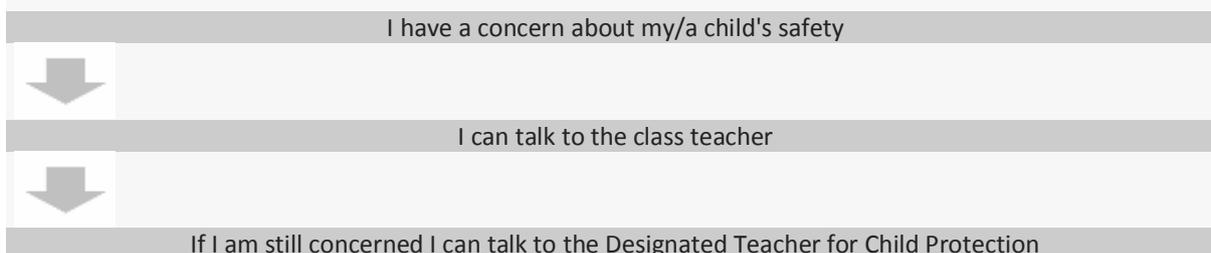
Parents are asked to brief school about arrangements following any separation or divorce. Members of staff need to be aware of legal responsibilities, agreed access or exclusion and any involvement of social services. Such information will be requested formally each September, but parents are encouraged to keep the school informed as necessary.

Parents will be made aware that staff may on occasions have to help change pupils' clothes when administering first aid, after toilet accidents, for PE and on other such occasions. The school's Intimate Care Policy, available to view on the school website, applies.

In the event of a parent making a complaint about a member of staff, volunteer or student, the school's complaints procedure should be followed and the complaint addressed directly to the principal. If the complaint is against the principal it should be addressed to the chairman of the governors. If a complaint should include an accusation against another child, the accused child's parents will be informed. Discipline must remain solely in the hands of the staff.

How a Parent can raise a Child Protection Concern

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:





If I am still concerned I can talk or write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

At any time, I can write or talk to a Social Worker or the Police

The Preventative Curriculum

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm of our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, the Rotherham Safeguarding Board and the school nurse.

An awareness of "stranger danger"; an understanding of how to respond to perceived threats; care in regard to e-safety; and the development of standards of behaviour that are appropriate for primary school children, are all reinforced through the school's work on Personal, Social and Health Education which is embedded in our curriculum. They are also the focus of assemblies, health promotion activities, visits from outside professionals and ongoing guidance as opportunities for such teaching and learning arise.

Safe Handling and Use of Reasonable Force

Our policy on physical restraint by staff is set out in accordance with guidelines from Team Teach. It acknowledges that staff must only use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy, along with the Educational Visits policy, reflect 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.

Intimate Care

As a general principle, members of staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with pupils. It is, however, unrealistic to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies; in particular, a distressed child may need reassurance that involves appropriate physical comforting. Our document, Safe Handling and the Use of Reasonable Force is intended to clarify school policy in relation to physical contact.

The Internet and Digital Technologies

Our policy on the internet and digital technologies is set out in a separate document and is informed by DE guidance. It acknowledges the opportunities for learning as well as the risks attached to the internet and digital technologies. Specifically it addresses safeguarding issues that may arise in the use of the internet and digital technologies.

Vetting Procedures

The school's vetting processes are compliant with practice advised in the DfE publication Keeping Children Safe In Education (April 2014).

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors and updated as necessary, particularly in the light of new advice from DfE.

Keeping Children Safe In Education

Please refer to the document published by the DfE in April 2014.

Annex B gives a detailed account of the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

Annex D refers to statutory guidance for regulated activity.

Annex E refers to the current procedures regarding Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

September 2014