

COWORTH-FLEXLANDS SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All staff at Coworth-Flexlands School recognise that they have a duty to promote the health, safety and well-being of the children entrusted to them. They accept that they have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupil and that the pupils, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability, have a fundamental right to be safe and to be protected from harm.

Staff also recognise that they are able to help prevent the abuse of children through the curriculum, by enabling pupils to acquire relevant information and attitudes to resist abuse in their own lives and by teaching them to assess the risks in a variety of situations and how to respond safely to them.

We will always use safe recruitment practices in line with guidance from the DfE and parents will be made aware of our safeguarding policy.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

At Coworth-Flexlands, we aim:

- To provide an environment where children feel secure, valued and are listened to in confidence
- To follow an accepted code of practice relating to all aspects of contact between staff and children
- All members of staff are provided with child protection awareness at induction including training in "What to do if"
- For all staff to be able to recognise signs of symptoms of suspected abuse – see Appendix 1
- To have a clear procedure and a line of communication in the event of suspected abuse

The objective of this policy is

- To raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse
- To ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with safeguarding issues
- To lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter a safeguarding issue

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

- A child or young person up to the age of 18 years is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse by parents or carers when the basic needs of the child are not being met through avoidable acts which have caused or placed the child at risk or harm
- Harm is defined by The Children Act 1989 as ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Deciding if harm is significant for the purposes of obtaining emergency protection orders, care orders or supervision orders under the Act will depend on a comparison of the child's health or development with what could reasonably be expected of a similar child
- Child abuse and harm are classified with the following categories which are also used as registration for the Child Protection Committee: Physical, emotional, sexual, neglect
- Abuse may occur when a child is living away from home. Children may be abused by a family member, carer, one or more than one pupils, someone they know or a complete stranger

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE (for registration purposes)

Physical Injury

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent injury (or suffering) to a child (including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy).

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development including non-organic failure to thrive.

Intellectual Abuse

Sometimes adults will 'force' children into so-called academic work for much of their waking lives. This can become rather extreme in some cases: children are pushed to achieving intellectually for most of their waking hours.

DETECTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN SCHOOL

- By staff noticing physical or behavioural symptoms
- By children disclosing information
- By a sustainable allegation from a third party

Abuse may be by an adult or another child and may take place inside or outside school. If a member of staff is being accused of abuse, the Head alone must be informed. If the Head is being accused of abuse, the Chair of Governors alone must be informed.

Signs of abuse

Physical Abuse signs. Sometimes physical abuse has clear warning signs, such as unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts. While all children will take a tumble now and then, look for age-inappropriate injuries, injuries that appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt, or a pattern of severe injuries. Other times, signs of physical abuse may be more subtle. The child may be fearful, shy away from touch or appear to be afraid to go home. Physically abusive caregivers may display anger management issues and excessive need for control. Their explanation of the injury might not ring true, or may be different from the child's description of the injury.

Emotional Abuse signs. A child's carer constant belittling, shaming, and humiliating her, calling her names and making negative comparisons to others, or constantly telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake". How the words are spoken can be terrifying to a child as well, such as yelling, threatening, or bullying or ignoring or rejecting a child, giving her the silent treatment. Another strong component of emotional abuse is

exposing the child to inappropriate situations or behavior. Especially damaging is witnessing acts that cause a feeling of helplessness and horror, such as in domestic violence or watching another sibling or pet be abused.

Sexual Abuse signs. A knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to her age, or even seductive behaviour. A child might appear to avoid another person, or display unusual behaviour- either being very aggressive or very passive. A child may have trouble sitting or standing, or have stained, bloody or torn underclothes, swelling, bruises, or bleeding in the genital area.

Signs of Neglect. Consistently bad hygiene, like appearing very dirty, matted and unwashed hair, or noticeable body odour. Another warning sign is untreated illnesses and physical injuries. A child's clothing may be poorly laundered or inappropriate for the weather, such as winter uniform in summer.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED

Designated Senior Person:	Mrs Anne Sweeney, Head
CPLO (Deputy Officer):	Mrs Sue Nelson, Deputy Head
Trained Officers:	Miss Amanda Engley (Head of Early Years) Mrs Alison Davey (Head of Science and P.E. Teacher)
Governor (CP responsible)	Mrs Kim Sedgwick

Introduction

Although staff accept that they have an important role to play at the recognition and referral stages of child protection, it is not their responsibility to investigate suspected abuse or neglect.

The school will ensure that the Head will be the Designated Senior Person as she is the person with the status and authority to take responsibility for child protection matters. In addition, there will be at least one Deputy Officer. These designated people will be trained every two years. Training will be given to the whole staff regularly, but at the very least every 3 years.

All staff and regular volunteers will be issued with Safeguarding guidance. Staff will also be given safeguarding updates as issued by the relevant authorities.

If a safeguarding referral is made, staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings.

Assurance will be sought from any organisation working with the school's pupils on another site that appropriate safeguarding checks have been made on their staff and suitable safeguarding procedures are in place.

All regular Volunteers are required to undertake an enhanced CRB check overseen by the school Bursar.

The Governors will appoint a Nominated Governor who will ensure that the school has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education – January 2007". At the present time this is Mrs Kim Sedgwick.

The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 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 within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

The school recognises that this document should be available to all parents on request, a short version is on the website and used to support the recruiting paperwork.

Procedures

- All concerns to be reported to and recorded by the Designated Senior Person or CPLO
- If the Head or CPLO is not available the concern will be reported to the Governor with the Child Protection responsibility
- Head to observe and assess the nature of the concern in the presence of the reporting adult
- Further information may then be sought from the child, tactfully and sympathetically, by the adult to whom the child first disclosed or the Designated Senior Person or CPLO
- In any case involving accusations against a member of staff or any person working within the school, whether paid or in a voluntary capacity, further information must be sought only by the Head or the Governor with the Child Protection responsibility. Any concern can then be discussed, through consultation or referral, with the local Social Service office. If an inquiry is considered necessary, the level of concern will determine whether suspension is appropriate. In the event of an allegation, suspension is necessary
- The school will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children; the address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel **01325 953 795**)
- Head will then follow the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Procedure and, at the same time, notify the Governor with Child protection responsibilities
- If there are concerns about possible abuse the designated person will refer the child to the Surrey Contact Centre Children's Team in writing following a telephone call. Contact details are: **0300 200 1006** operating 8.00am to 6.00pm. CPLOs may consult with an assistant Team Manager by telephoning 0208 541 7041/7043. In an emergency out of hours, referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517898
- In situations where there are very unspecific concerns, it may be appropriate to monitor and record the nature of these concerns and to be vigilant in keeping records over a period of time
- The school will ensure that all written records of concerns about a child are kept confidentially and securely, separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school
- In situations where it is believed that there is abuse of a pupil by one or more, other pupils a thorough and immediate investigation must be carried out by the CPLO, Headmistress and Class Teachers. All parties involved must be included and parents informed where appropriate
- Class and playground incidents books should be referred to during the investigation
- See Appendix 3 regarding Intimate Care
- See Appendix 4 regarding Restraint of Pupils
- See Appendix 5 regarding Procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers or any other person working in the school

ADDITIONAL EYFS REQUIREMENTS

- Miss Amanda Engley will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS and liaise with the Head, the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board as appropriate.
- Ofsted and Surrey Safeguarding Children Board will be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at this school (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of action taken in respect of these allegations.
- Surrey Safeguarding Children will be informed of any serious accident or serious injury to, or the death of any child whilst in the care of Coworth-Flexlands School and act on the advice given.
- Ofsted will be informed as soon as is reasonably possible but within 14 days at the most.

CONFIDENTIALITY, REPORTS AND RECORDS

See Appendix 2 for dealing with child protection concerns particularly regarding questions, information gathering, avoiding denial and reassuring the child and on confidentiality.

Guidance

At all times the priority lies with the child's welfare and safety.

Confidentiality means not withholding information that should be shared and not sharing information unless there is a clear need to know.

In all cases of concern, a record should be made (within 24 hours) including details of observations of the incident or behaviour, where it took place, when it took place, with whom, the sequence of behaviour, any other relevant signs or symptoms and the context in which this took place.

The record should also include specific decisions about the nature of the record being kept and what is intended to be done with the record, such as reporting back to the other agencies and, when appropriate, with the parents.

When it is appropriate, a verbatim record of a conversation or interview may be made at the time. However, if this is inhibiting or inappropriate, a written record should be made within 24 hours of the conversation.

All written records and reports will be kept securely locked in the Headmistress's office. In such cases, when there is nothing to substantiate any abusive behaviour and the concern is considered to have no foundation, records may be destroyed after the child has left the school.

Staff must take the following steps to protect themselves from risk of harm or of allegations of harm: never make arrangements to meet a pupil on his or her own without school and parental permission; Do not: photograph pupils; exchange emails, text messages or use any other electronic form of communication inappropriately; give out your own personal details; give girls lifts or accompany them to places except with the direct knowledge and approval of their parents and the Head.

The central principle of The Children Act 1989 is that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration and all concerns should be treated seriously. A school with an open and protective culture where all feel safe and free to talk will provide the best environment for the protection of the child.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For all staff to be aware of the “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education – January 2007” to be found in the Head’s office
- For all staff to attend an INSET day on general awareness training involving the Child Protection Liaison Officer. This training is to take place every 3 years
- The school will designate a practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with local statutory agencies as appropriate. This person currently is Amanda Engley
- For training in child protection matters to become a regular part of the staff programme
- To have sound policies on Staff Recruitment, see Appendix 6
- The school will operate safe recruitment procedures (including CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations)
- For all staff taking children off site, to ensure that those staff employed by that organisation have had the necessary suitability checks
- This document is revised annually by the Board of Governors, and the Board will ensure that all aspects of the policy are implemented efficiently
- The Governor with responsibility for Child Protection must review all procedures relating to Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment annually, and ensure that all procedures are implemented efficiently
- The procedures are in accordance with those of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board
- If any incident arises which indicates a deficiency of any sort in the set procedures, this must be remedied without delay and the Policy amended and appropriate training given
- Termly the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and the Head will review the Class and Playground Incident Books and act accordingly
- Termly the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and the Head will request from the CPLO’s any guidance of any areas which need reviewing. The Governor with Child protection responsibilities will ensure that changes arising from the term’s review are implemented efficiently

Monitoring and Review

The governing body regularly reviews any incidents detailed in the interventions book. The Governor with Child protection responsibilities will participate in the School’s training with regard to the Safeguarding procedures. This policy is reviewed biennially by the governing body who will require that any deficiencies or weaknesses be remedied without delay

Signed:
Chairman of Governors

Supplementary policies to be read in conjunction with this policy:

Anti-bullying Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Behaviour Management Policy
ICT Acceptable Use Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

Information taken from the DfE publication “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” (ISBN No 978-1-84478-854-5) and Guidance for dealing with Allegations for Abuse against Teachers and other staff (20011/12).