



## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Rationale**

This policy has been written to reflect our active commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils at our school. We believe that children have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. Therefore we aim to provide a secure, caring environment and a curriculum which nurtures self-esteem and empowers children to protect themselves.

We aim to ensure that children who are vulnerable, at risk and have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm are identified, and appropriate action is taken to keep them safe. The school has and will continue to develop a systematic approach towards identification and referral of suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. We recognise that abuse may be emotional, physical, sexual or through neglect.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher, Senior Designated Teacher, other Staff and the Governing Body.**

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school. Any one of them could be the first point of disclosure for a child.

The **Headteacher** will:

- be responsible for all child protection matters;
- make arrangements to undertake training together with any other relevant staff;
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all applicants for positions in the school – paid and voluntary. This will include checking identity, qualifications, professional and character references, health and physical capacity, previous employment history to ensure gaps are accounted for, and criminal records;
- ensure that child protection procedures set out in this policy are followed by all staff and volunteers;
- ensure that all staff and volunteers have undertaken up-to-date training, including inter-agency working in the case of the senior designated teacher. This will include providing child protection training for all new recruits;

- have in place procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff in accordance with LA guidelines and ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of them;
- ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and address such concerns sensitively and effectively;
- 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 to know who to turn to 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.

The **senior designated teacher** must:

- have received training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case, together with a working knowledge of how to contribute effectively when required to local child protection conferences and other procedures and discussions;
- access resources;
- ensure that all staff and volunteers recognise that he/she is a source of information, advice, support and expertise within the school;
- be responsible for co-ordinating referrals by liaising with Social Services and other agencies over cases of abuse and allegations of abuse;
- ensure that colleagues have had training in child protection relevant to their role and needs and know how to identify and report any concerns they have to the senior designated teacher immediately they arise;
- ensure each member of staff and volunteer has access to and understands this child protection policy;
- liaise with the Headteacher to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations to ensure there is always cover for their role;
- work with the Governing Body to ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated annually;
- keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of referrals or concerns;
- ensure parents have access to the child protection policy and are aware that referrals may be made by the school;
- ensure that when a child transfers to another school the next school receives his/her child protection file in time to make any necessary arrangements, and advise the receiving school of the need for this file to be kept separate from main school file.

**All staff** have a responsibility to protect children from abuse. Anyone made aware of, or suspecting, child abuse should take immediate action. Actual physical injury, verbal statements of actual physical, emotional or sexual abuse and evidence of neglect justify urgent referral to the senior designated teacher. They should respond to the child by:

- treating him/her with utmost sensitivity, doing nothing to damage the child further through thoughtlessness or carelessness in their reaction to the child's distress;
- listening and recording as accurately as possible what the child says with dates and times;
- not probing or asking leading questions. It is the job of the police to investigate;
- not promising to keep secrets.

The information should be passed directly to one of the designated staff members.

## **E –Safety**

If a member of staff is concerned that a child's safety is at risk because it is suspected that someone is using communication technologies (such as social networking sites) to make inappropriate contact with the child, the following steps should be taken:

1. Report to and discuss with the designated child protection officer in school who will contact parents / guardians
2. Advise the child on how to terminate the communication and save all evidence
3. Contact CEOP <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>
4. Consider the involvement of police and social services
5. Inform LA e-safety officer

The **Governing Body** will ensure that:

- the school has a child protection policy that conforms to the LA and Area Child Protection Committee's (LSGB) guidance and is reviewed annually;
- the school has a policy and procedures for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers which takes into account child protection measures and a policy for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers;
- the school has a senior designated teacher to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues;
- members of the governing body and all staff have received appropriate training and information to carry out their responsibilities for child protection;
- any deficiencies in child protection arrangements are brought to the attention of the Governing Body and are remedied immediately;
- a member of the governing body is nominated to be the person responsible for liaising with the LA and external agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher.

This **nominated governor**, where s/he is also the chair of governors will:

- ensure that the school's child protection policy is in place and is reviewed and reported on annually to the governing body;
- oversee procedures and take action according to LA procedures, where there are allegations against the Headteacher.

When the nominated governor is not the chair of governors all allegations against the Headteacher should be referred to the chair of governors and/or the LA lead Child Protection Officer.

**Parents and carers** need to be aware that should any member of staff suspect that a child might have been deliberately harmed or neglected by their parent/carer, the school has a duty to inform the local Social Care department. It is then the duty of Social Care to decide on the best way of carrying out an investigation. The police have the right to speak with the child without parental consent when it is in the best interests of the child. They may do so on school premises or, as appropriate, in special premises where a video may be made. However, they cannot take a child off the school premises without the permission of the Headteacher. When the police interview a child, a member of staff known to the child should provide appropriate support.

#### **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The Headteacher will report to the Pupils, Admissions and Education Committee annually on the implementation of the policy, identifying any necessary changes in approach which are deemed necessary.

To be reviewed March 2010