

**Our Lady and St. Joseph R.C.
Primary School**

Child Protection Policy

Child Protection Policy

'Shine with Love, Kindness and Respect'

Our Mission is to foster the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and to provide a high standard of education with equality and opportunity for all.

Our Lady and St. Joseph's is concerned about the welfare and safety of all its pupils and attempts to create an environment in which the children feel 'safe, secure and happy'.

Our School procedure for safeguarding children will be in line with The Learning Trust and ACPC procedures. This policy was reviewed with the revised child protection guidance for education in mind in October 2009, and will be reviewed annually in accordance with the new guidelines set out by the DFES.

Statutory framework:

'Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999)' requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Area Child Protection Committee. Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of abuse.

DfES Circular 10/95 (Protecting Children from Abuse: The role of the education service) places the following responsibilities on all schools.

- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- A Designated Teacher should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.
- Staff with designated responsibility for Child Protection should receive appropriate training.
- Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Area Child Protection Committee.
- Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse.

Circular 10/95 also states that 'parents should be made aware of the school Child's Protection Policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigation agencies in the interests of the child'.

The Designated Teacher:

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Sean Flood (and in his absence Lucille Scales). He is responsible for:

- Adhering to the ACPC, LEA and school procedures with regard to referring a child if there are any concerns about possible abuse.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make a referral.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records.
- Ensuring that an indication of further record keeping is marked on the pupil records.
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to social services.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that all new members of staff are given a copy of our Child Protection Policy and understand our school procedures this should be done as part of their induction into the school.
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff.
- Ensure that the Head Teacher is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to social services).
- Liaise with Social Service teams over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Submit reports to, and attend Child Protection Conferences.
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

Supporting Children

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated. We recognise that a child may feel self-blame.

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

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

At Our Lady and St. Joseph we will support all pupils by:

- Encouraging self-esteem through the PSHCE curriculum and the whole school approaches to emotional literacy programmes.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Social Services as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under the confidential record of the pupil's new school.

School Procedures:

- If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Teacher.
- Information regarding the concerns must be recorded by the member of staff on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.
- The Designated Teacher will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the social services department. If it is decided to make a referral to social services this will be done without prior discussion with the parents.
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.
- If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school the Designated Teacher will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.

When to be concerned:

Staff should be concerned about a pupil if he or she:

- Has an injury, which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour, which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
- Is reluctant to get changed in front of others when getting ready for P.E.

Dealing with a Disclosure:

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but not make promises, which it might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality - it might be necessary to refer to Social Services.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions.
- Not criticize the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Record Keeping:

When a pupil has made a disclosure the member of staff should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Not destroy the original notes in case a court needs them.
- Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Confidentiality:

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential. The Head Teacher or Designated Teacher will disclose information to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff must be aware that they have 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 secrets.

Supporting staff:

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a Child Protection case in general is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with Sean Flood.

Allegations involving school staff

We understand that a parent or pupil may make allegations against a member of staff.

- If such an allegation is made the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the head teacher.
- The Head Teacher on such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the lead officer for child protection at The Learning Trust.
- If the allegation involves the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher will immediately inform the Chair of Governors and the nominated Child Protection Governor, who will consult with The Learning Trust's lead officer for Child Protection.
- Our Lady and St Joseph follows The Learning Trust/ ACPC procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which is readily available in the school.

Whistle blowing:

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fails to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about attitude or actions of colleagues.

Governors:

- **Derek Vitali is the Governor responsibility for Child Protection**
- Our Governing body ensures that the policy and its procedures are in place, regularly reviewed and in accordance with the Learning Trust and locally agreed guidelines.
- Operates safe recruitment procedures.
- Has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers
- Has a senior member of the school's Senior Management Team designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues including providing advice, support, and liaising with The Learning Trust and other agencies. He/she should receive refresher training every 2 years and receive interagency ACPC training.

Reviewed and ratified October 2009