

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Approved by Learning and Achievement Committee, Spring 2007
Approved by Full Governing Body, Spring 2007
To be reviewed Summer 2009

RATIONALE:

St Bartholomew's School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children from risk of or actual abuse and in promoting the welfare of children.

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. In order to protect children the school is committed to:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. (Refer to school guidance on recruitment).
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse through regular training of all staff.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with the agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

GUIDANCE:

For all staff, full and part-time, and students on placement or visiting the school:

All school staff should take normal precautions not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with relation to child protection. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children to be conducted in view of other adults.

Following training, all staff are able to recognise any signs of suspected child abuse and to report any concerns immediately to the Designated Officer, or in his/her absence, the Headteacher; or thereafter the most senior member of staff on site at the time.

Where a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff, procedure must be followed, and the Designated Officer notified verbally immediately. This must be followed by a written record, using the appropriate forms, within 24 hours of the disclosure. Confidentiality cannot be assured for pupils, however, information should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Staff are also required to monitor children who may be at risk and record observations, keeping the records in a secure place whilst maintaining the confidentiality of this information to those who 'need to know'.

Designated Officer

In the absence of the Designated Officer, the Headteacher will assume responsibility; or thereafter the most senior member of staff on site at the time.

The Designated Officer carries the legal responsibility to inform Children's Services of any concerns we have about possible child protection issues. This may be by a telephone call and within 24 hours by a written referral.

Whenever possible the Designated Officer will have already discussed concerns about a pupil with his or her parents / carers and will tell parents / carers when a referral is to be made to Children's Services.

However, in some exceptional circumstances the parent / carer will not be informed in advance. This would be because the child may be seen to be at risk. In circumstances where a referral is made without first informing the parents, they will be told about the concerns and actions as soon as possible.

Record Keeping

It is important that what is recorded is kept factual, and includes reported speech where appropriate; opinion should not be given unless there is some form of evidence which can also be quoted. The sheet must be signed, dated and timed, and given immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

Confidential information held on a particular child, must be stored separately from the main file, in a secure place.

On transfer of schools any confidential notes and records that are no longer considered appropriate to send on are shredded. If there is a need for notes or records to be passed on to the receiving school they will be sent or passed on to the Headteacher in an envelope marked confidential and for his/her attention.

The Child Protection Register

The Designated Officer for Child Protection will inform those members of staff who have direct pastoral responsibility for children whose names are on the child protection register. These children must be monitored very carefully and the smallest concern should be passed immediately to the Designated Officer for Child Protection.

The Designated Officer has responsibility for managing and monitoring the school's part in the child protection care plan and liaising with the key worker from Children's Services.

IMPLEMENTATION:

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, 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.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Officer for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and governor knows the name of the Designated Officer responsible for child protection and their role.

- A copy of the booklet ‘**Safeguarding Children – A Shared Responsibility – Reference for Staff**’ is located in offices and with the Designated Governor for Child Protection, and is revised annually.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Officer responsible for child protection.
- Ensuring that the school policy on physical intervention is understood by all staff.
- Whistle blowing procedures are understood by students and staff.
- Insist that all visitors to the school sign in to the site office and are required to wear a visitor’s badge.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by ensuring that this policy is publicised to parents and is available upon request.
- Facilitate the Attendance Officer notifying the Designated Officer for Child Protection and the Education Welfare Officer for the school, if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days by a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept secure, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment and selection practices are always followed. Identity checks should be carried out, including CRB and List 99. References should be verified.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Good lines of communication will be important.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum, especially that of PSICHE, which will develop the skills of children to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- The school Behaviour Policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Ensuring that the Anti-bullying Policy is effectively implemented.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children’s Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Office and the Educational Psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse:

All staff must be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, which can take many forms, but they are usually divided into four categories:

- **Physical injury:** can range from over-chastisement, slapping with the hand, a belt, a stick or other object, to shaking, punching or throwing a child across the room. Children have died as a result of deliberate physical injury by parents or other "carers".
- **Neglect:** can range from ignoring a child's developmental needs to not feeding or clothing her/him adequately and not supervising her/him adequately.
- **Sexual abuse:** is the involvement of a child or adolescent in sexual activities they do not understand, cannot give consent to and which are not acceptable by our society. This includes inappropriate touching, obscene photographs, child pornography as well as attempted or actual sexual intercourse.
- **Emotional abuse:** ranges from rejecting a child, refusing to show a child love or affection, or deliberately making a child unhappy by continually belittling her/him or verbally abusing her/him.

Although divided into four categories for ease of description, the forms of abuse are often found together.

EVALUATION:

The PSCHE curriculum includes discussions and input from local agencies to enable age appropriate understanding of the concept of 'keeping safe'. Role plays are used to enable children to act out difficult and potentially dangerous situations.

The progress of a group will be monitored using evidence such as;

- Attendance
- Sanctions logged
- Academic progress v indicators

The record of staff training in Child Protection and in guidelines relating to whistle blowing is reviewed by Governors, to ensure that this is included in the new staff induction programme and re-visited for all staff a minimum of every two years.

Designated Governors for Child Protection will have access to the recording forms held by the Designated Officer for Child Protection.

The booklet '**Safeguarding Children – A Shared Responsibility – Reference for Staff**' is located in offices and with the designated Governors for Child Protection. All copies are revised annually.

Evaluations of practice and case reviews will be in the context of Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards; Child Protection Handbook 2006. An electronic version of this handbook is located on the school intranet: Topics; Safeguarding Children.

.....
Signed by Chairman

.....
Date