



## HOLMBUSH PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Child Protection Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989; and Education Act 2002 and in line with government publications:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused 2003
- DfES guidance Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruiting in Education
- Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures (produced by West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Boards).

The governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils; 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.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected and feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.

- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

### Procedures

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with the West Sussex LSCB Procedures. We will ensure that:

- All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities.
- We have a nominated designated member of staff which is Rebecca Jackson, the Headteacher.
- Our designated member of staff has undertaken the initial designated member of staff training and subsequent refresher courses every two years delivered through the Safeguarding Unit.
- We have a member of staff who will act in the designated member of staff's absence which is Susan Stickley, our Deputy Headteacher.
- All members of staff are provided with Child Protection Training every three years.
- All members of staff, volunteers and governors know:
  - The signs and symptoms of concern
  - How to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse
  - What to do if they are concerned about a child
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the schools' Child Protection Policy.
- Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on the school site at any time.
- Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.
- We will ensure that our selection and recruitment of staff meet the requirements as set down in safer Recruitment guidance.
- We will ensure that at least one member of each interview panel has completed the safer recruitment course.

Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated.

The name of the designated member of staff for Child Protection will be clearly advertised in the school for all staff, with a statement explaining the schools role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection policy.

We will:

- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register and we will inform the EWO of

any child who is missing from school with no explanation after 10 days. We investigate any unexplained absence ourselves on the first day.

- 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. See Record Keeping.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; 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 practices are always followed.

### **Responsibilities**

The designated teacher, designated member of staff is responsible for:

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Social Care Assessment Team, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. A written record of the referral will be sent to the Assessment Team by the end of the working day the referral is made using the proforma in Appendix One. A copy will be kept on file.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records in a locked filing cabinet and ensure that extended family members are kept together or cross referenced.
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil school file.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring that either they or the class teacher attends Child Protection Conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meeting, contributes to assessments, and provides a report if needed.
- Ensuring that any pupil that is subject to a Child Protection plan who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection training for all school staff.
- Providing an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes and reviews of relevant policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DMS and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children subject to a child protection plan (anonymised). A blank report can be found in Appendix Two.

### **Supporting Children**

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

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

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

Our school will support all pupils by:

- Encouraging self esteem and self assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying the Assessment Team 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 confidential cover to the pupils new school and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

### **Confidentiality**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Headteacher will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a 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 which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Services with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Duty Manager at the Assessment Team on this point.

### **Supporting Staff**

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DMS and to seek further support as appropriate.

### **Allegations against staff**

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

All staff should be aware of West Sussex Guidance on Behaviour Issues, and the school's own Behaviour Management Policy.

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher.

The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as in above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and the Human Resources Advisor.

In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice as in above.

We have a procedure for managing the suspension of a contract for a community user in the event of an allegation arising in that context.

### **Record Keeping**

Not all child protection information results in a referral – small pieces of information may not be significant on their own, but can help to contribute to a jigsaw picture of abuse.

All staff should

- Make a record of all information and their concerns.
- Include nagging doubts and hearsay
- Pass the information onto the designated teacher using the form in Appendix Three.

Notes may be word processed or hand written. They will include the following:

- Date of incident
- Date and time of the record being made
- Name and date of birth of the child/ren concerned
- A factual account of what happened (verbatim reports from the child if possible)
- A note of any other people involved, e.g. as witnesses

- Action taken and any further plans e.g. monitor and review. The designated member of staff will complete a Child Protection Record Evaluation. See Appendix Four.
- Printed name of the person making the record
- Job title of person making the record
- Signature

Records will:

- Identify the source of the information e.g. Mrs Smith, a MDMS, informed me that... or I saw Fred on the school field at break time...
- Be factual or based on fact.
- Record what was seen, heard etc and will be specific.
- Include opinion as long as it can be justified in some way.
- Make a note of the information and with whom it was shared.
- Avoid specialist jargon which a member of another agency may not understand.

For each child protection record the file will have a facing sheet with the child's full name, date of birth, address, name and address of GP, information about family members, an indication of where a piece of information is, if it has been lifted from the file for some reason and a note if there is more than one file for the child. There will also be a record of all contact regarding the child using the contact sheet, see appendix five.

If a child moves to another school the whole file will be sent, separately from the school file, to the receiving school.

It will be marked 'confidential, addressee only' and should be sent to the Headteacher of the receiving school.

We will give the name and contact number of the key worker who dealt with the family if applicable.

### **Making a referral**

When a referral is made the following information will be provided:

- The referrer's details: name, work place, job title
- The child's name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Gender
- Ethnic origin
- Religion
- Language
- Name and address of GP
- Whether the child is currently safe - are there any deadlines approaching e.g. the end of the school day
- When the child was last seen by a member of staff
- Names of other children in the family
- Any significant relationships the child has with others
- Details of the concern
- Source of information

- If the family is aware of the referral and reasons why we have not contacted them
- Parents/carers response to our concerns and their response to the referral
- Changes in the child's behaviour or presentation recently
- Whether or not the child has any disability or special needs, the nature and degree of the disability and the effect, if any, on the child's ability to communicate
- The level of the child's comprehension and concentration
- Any network of support provided to the family
- Any history of our own contact with the family
- The family's contact with other agencies
- The names, ages and schools of other children who are living in the household

If the abuse has been perpetrated by another child we will refer both children.

The Headteacher will review all Child Protection records termly, during December, April and July and report to the next Full Governors.

### **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak in the first instance, to the AEO (Children's Safeguarding)

### **Physical Intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out separately, and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the Team Teach technique.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

### **Bullying**

Our policy on bullying is set out in the Behaviour policy and Anti-bullying policy documents and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes homophobic and gender related bullying.

## **Racist Incidents**

Our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

## **Prevention**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include across the curriculum, including PSHCE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

## **Health and Safety**

Our health and safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school when undertaking schools trips and visits.

The following policies also offer advice on practice and guidelines for supporting Child Protection:

- Health and Safety
- Anti-Bullying
- Racist Incidents
- Physical Intervention
- Whistleblowing

This policy was written using the West Sussex Model Child Protection Policy by Rebecca Jackson, Headteacher.