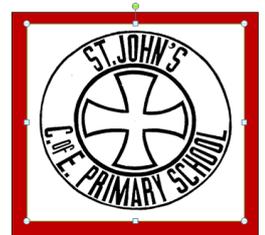




St John's CE Primary



Child protection and safeguarding policy

Contents:

1. Policy statement and principles
2. The Education Act 2002
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Good practice guidelines
5. Abuse of trust
6. Children who may be particularly vulnerable
7. Support for those involved in a child protection issue
8. Complaints procedure
9. If you have concerns about a colleague
10. Allegations against staff
11. Staff training
12. Safer recruitment
13. The Prevent strategy
14. Extended and off-site arrangements
15. Photography and images
16. E-Safety
17. Recognising abuse
18. Taking action
19. Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Reviewed by:

Designated Senior Person	Phil Thomson	Date: September 2015
Deputy Designated Senior Person	Karen Allen	Date: September 2015
Headteacher	Phil Thomson	Date: September 2015
Nominated Governor	Phil Green	Date: September 2015

1. Policy statement and principals

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. *(See Appendix 1)*

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- Safer children make more successful learners
- Representatives of the whole-school community of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding children board (LSCB).

Policy principles

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

Policy aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

2. The Education Act 2002

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Key personnel

The designated senior person for child protection is Phil Thomson

The deputy-Designated Person is Karen Allen.

Contact details: email: head.stjohnscrossens@schools.sefton.gov.uk tel: 01704227441

The nominated child protection governor is Phil Green

Contact details: email: revphilgreen@talktalk.net

The headteacher is Phil Thomson

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns.

All schools must nominate a senior member of staff to coordinate child protection arrangements.

The Designated Person (DP):

- Is appropriately trained
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Has an understanding of LSCB procedures
- Keeps written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- Notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- Ensures that when a pupil with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the pupil's social worker is informed
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy
- Ensures that the child protection policy is updated annually
- Liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- Will make the child protection policy available to parents.

The deputy-Designated Person is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the DP, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the Designated Person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The governing body ensures that the school has:

- A DP for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- A child protection policy and procedures that are consistent with LSCB requirements, reviewed annually and made available to parents on request
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the headteacher
- Safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, receive child protection training, with refresher training at three-yearly intervals; and the DP receives refresher training at two-yearly intervals
- Arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's child protection provision

The governing body nominates a member (Chair of Governors) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher.

An annual audit and report will be submitted to the local authority about how the governing body's duties have been carried out. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

The headteacher:

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- Allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DP and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- Ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

4. Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice. Good practice applies to all staff and includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among pupils
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact and information-sharing
- Asking the pupil's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse.

5. Abuse of trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

The school's Code of Ethical Practice (based on Safer Working Practices) sets out our expectations of staff and is received by all staff members.

6. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions, and child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Living in a domestic abuse situation
- Affected by parental substance misuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Live transient lifestyles
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- Involved directly or indirectly in prostitution or child trafficking
- Do not have English as a first language.

Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats.

7. Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff that become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Nominating separate link people for the child and member of staff, where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, to avoid any conflict of interest
- Responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- Storing records securely
- Offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- Following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- Cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

8. Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Senior staff, the headteacher and governors manage complaints.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures, which can be found in our **school complaints policy. (A copy of which can be found on the school website)**

9. If you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a

report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's **whistleblowing code** (*a hard copy of which is in the staffroom and an electronic copy is on the Shared Drive*) enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the headteacher. Complaints about the headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.

10. Staff who are the subject of an allegation

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the headteacher. Allegations against the headteacher should be reported to the chair of governors.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the school's **policy on allegations against staff**, *a hard copy of which is in the staffroom and an electronic copy is on the Shared Drive*.

11. Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive training during their induction. All staff, including the headteacher (unless the headteacher is the DP) and governors will receive training that is updated at least every three years (although it is school practice to update training every year) and the DP will receive training updated at least every two years, including training in inter-agency procedures.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's **Visiting Staff Card (found in the Reception area or at the school office)**.

12. Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (pp20-54) together with the local authority and the school's individual procedures.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau as appropriate to their role
- Be interviewed.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy.

13. The PREVENT Strategy

What is the Prevent strategy?

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes. The Prevent strategy covers all types of terrorism and extremism, including the extreme right wing, violent Islamist groups and other causes.

How does the Prevent strategy apply to schools?

From July 2015 all schools (as well as other organisations) have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremist and violent views the same way we protect them from drugs or gang violence. Importantly, we can provide a safe place for pupils to discuss these issues so they better understand how to protect themselves.

What does this mean in practice?

Many of the things we already do in school to help children become positive, happy members of society also contribute to the Prevent strategy. These include: • Exploring other cultures and religions and promoting diversity • Challenging prejudices and racist comments • Developing critical thinking skills and a strong, positive self-identity • Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, as well as British values such as democracy We will also protect children from the risk of radicalisation, for example by using filters on the internet to make sure they can't access extremist and terrorist material, or by vetting visitors who come into school to work with pupils. Different schools will carry out the Prevent duty in different ways, depending on the age of the children and the needs of the community.

Contact any staff

If you have any questions or concerns about the Prevent strategy and what it means for your child, please do not hesitate to contact the Headteacher.

14. Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

15. Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Seek parental consent
- Use only the pupil's first name with an image
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- Encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

16. E-Safety

Mobile phones and computers are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations online, webcam filming, photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's **e-safety policy** [*found on the school website*] explains how we try to keep pupils and staff safe in school. Cyber-bullying by

pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and [pupils are not allowed to access these sites in school].

Staff must follow the acceptable user policy held in school.

17. Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the Internet. An adult or adults or another child or children may abuse them.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. Not letting them express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age, or developmentally, inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including Cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet) Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by men, women can also commit sexual abuse as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2010).

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress.

All incidences of bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. (The Anti-bullying Policy can be found on the website.)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

All staff must be aware of, and have a copy of, the warning signs and vulnerabilities checklist.

The following are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse: living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality), history of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect), recent bereavement or loss, gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated CSE only), learning disabilities, unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose their sexual orientation to their families, friends with young people who are sexually exploited, homeless, lacking friends from the same age group, living in a gang neighbourhood, living in residential care, living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer, low self-esteem or self-confidence, young carer.

Signs and behaviours of children who are already being sexually exploited are: missing from home or care, physical injuries, drug or alcohol misuse, involvement in offending, repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations, absent from school, change in physical appearance, evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites, estranged from their family, receipt of gifts from unknown sources, recruiting others into exploitative situations, poor mental health, self-harm, and thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a collective term for all procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. In the UK it is considered child abuse and is illegal. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM.

Designated Persons for child protection in school should be aware of the guidance that is available in respect of FGM and should be vigilant to the risk of it being practised. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged 4 – 13 years of age but the majority of cases are thought to take place between the ages of 5 – 8. The summer holidays, or other extended holiday absence during the school year, are particular periods when schools are encouraged to be alert to the signs of potential or actual abuse.

Risk factors: staff should be particularly alert for signs when a girl comes from a community where FGM is practised, where the family is less integrated within UK society, where the mother or other women in the extended family have also been subject to FGM, where a girl has been withdrawn from sex education lessons and there is a reluctance for her to be informed about her body and her rights.

Indicators that it might be about to take place include: being a girl between the ages of 5-8 within a community where FGM is practised, when a female family elder visits, particularly if she arrives from another country, a girl talking about a 'special procedure' or saying that she is attending a special ceremony to become a woman, a girl being taken out of the country for a prolonged period.

Indicators that it has taken place: a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, she spends longer than normal going to the toilet, she spends long periods of time away from the classroom during the day because of bladder or menstrual problems, prolonged or repeated absences from school, withdrawal or depression when a girl returns to school after a prolonged period of absence, reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.

Staff should not engage at this stage with the pupil's family or others within the community and do not reveal that any enquiries which might be related to FGM, as this could increase the risk to the girl. Students should feel able to discuss issues that they may be facing, materials explaining FGM are available for staff and students, advice and signposts are available for accessing additional help and staff receive training.

Indicators of abuse – what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of

behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated senior person.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently miss school or arrive late
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their school work
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DP to decide how to proceed.

It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties. The school will do everything in its power to reduce the impact of abuse as far as is possible during the time that the child is in our care. The action points for this will vary from child to child depending on the type of abuse, their age, circumstances and personal development.

18. Taking action

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- Report your concern to the DP by the end of the day
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete a record of concern
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you suspect a pupil is at risk of harm

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the **concern form** to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DP.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the pupils staff will:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and collected – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- Not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- **Under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil’s mother think about all this
- Tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- Tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the designated senior person. Otherwise it is the duty of the member of staff to inform the DP of what has been discussed. If the pupil does agree to go and see the Designated Person, the staff member should inform the DP that the child will be coming to see them at some point
- Report verbally to the DP even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- Write up their conversation, using the child’s own words, as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** and hand it to the Designated Person
- Seek support if they feel distressed

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DP will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care. Parents should not be notified in cases of forced marriage or female genital mutilation, this should be discussed with social care first.

Referral to children’s social care

The DP will make a referral to children’s social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Other children or young people may harm children. There will be occasions when a pupil’s behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than other procedures.

The care of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff will follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, or police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy, the headteacher and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies:

- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Personal and intimate care
- Complaints procedure
- Anti-bullying
- Appropriate physical contact
- Whistleblowing
- SEN
- Behaviour
- Missing children
- Safer recruitment
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary

19. Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated senior person, headteacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage. Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the headteacher or DP.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information sharing is available to parents and pupils on request.

Contact Numbers:

Julie Palin/Tracy McKeating – Managers, Attendance & Welfare Service. Tel: 0151 934 3359

Social Care. Tel: 0151 934 3737 Fax: 0151 934 3739

Pauline Trubshaw – Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – Allegations against Staff) Tel: 0151 934 3783

Forced Marriage Unit. Tel: 020 7008 0151/020 7008 1500

Police. Tel: 999/101

BullyBusters. Tel: 0800 169 6928

Childline. Tel: 0800 1111

Guidance:

Working Together to Safeguard Children. A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children. 2010

Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education 2006

Multi-agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (HM Government 2011)

Briefings & Information for Use During Inspections of Maintained Schools & Academies (Ofsted updated Dec 2012)