

THE PARAGON SCHOOL
JUNIOR SCHOOL OF PRIOR PARK COLLEGE
CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Core principles

- The Headteacher and governing body of The Paragon School, Junior School of Prior Park College, take seriously their duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements are put in place to identify, assess, refer and support those children who are, or are at risk of, suffering harm. They will have regard to the DFES guidance: Safeguarding Children in Education 2004 in fulfilling their duties.
- The school recognises that all staff (i.e. senior management, teachers, temporary and peripatetic staff, non-teaching staff, volunteers and other staff on site and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and in promoting and safeguarding the well-being of our children. We recognise that, because of our day-to-day contact with the children we are well-placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

All members of the school staff should be alert to the possible signs of abuse of a pupil. Abuse may take several forms, which are not mutually exclusive.

Physical Abuse results from acts or omissions by others, which causes injury to the child. Bruises, burns, scalds, abrasions should be of concern to staff.

Neglect involves not providing the basic necessities: food, warmth, shelter, caring supervision or reasonable cleanliness.

Emotional Abuse which is harder to detect or define, may result from locking the child away, excessive shouting, teasing or humiliation, the denial of love, affection, interest or friendship, over-protection so as to deny the child the normal experiences of life.

Sexual Abuse is the involvement of emotionally immature young people in sexual activity with an adult or significantly older person to which they cannot give informed consent or which breaks social taboos. It is more common than was previously believed and can have serious long-term damaging effects on the victim.

There will be other circumstances, not amounting to abuse, which give cause for serious concern about the welfare of pupils. Questions of the young person being in moral danger, being uncared for, engaging in anti-social or inappropriate behaviour, may be referred to the Head or designated CPO and through them, to the Social Services Department.

- The policy and associated procedures should be understood by all staff and implemented when an individual child is deemed or known to be in need of protection. Their use is not subject to discretion.
- The school will have a senior member of school staff, who has received appropriate training, as the designated person for child protection, and a nominated governor for child protection.
- Appropriate, up to date child protection training opportunities will be made available to all staff in accordance with recommendations.
- The school will establish and maintain an environment where our pupils:

- Feel safe;
 - Are confident and able to express themselves on matters of personal health and welfare;
 - Know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried;
 - Are listened to;
 - Are provided with opportunities in the curriculum to develop the skills needed to keep them safe.
- All staff are responsible for behaving professionally in their relationships with children, maintaining appropriate boundaries whilst providing the support and supervision required.
 - The school will practice safe recruitment, including checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who work with children.
 - The school will ensure that parents are aware of its responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children and will keep them informed and involved in supporting their children, in accordance with child protection procedures.
 - Issues of confidentiality should be clearly understood by all staff. Procedures and guidance for sharing information and record keeping will be adhered to.

Designated Members of Staff

These members of staff liaise with the outside agencies in cases of suspected abuse, and can advise on the appropriate procedures. The designated members of staff for child protection and welfare are Titus Mills (headteacher) and Hazel Hosford (assistant deputy) and the nominated governor is Maggie Rae.

Staff have an obligation to report all suspicions of abuse to a Designated Member of Staff or to the Head. It then becomes the responsibility of the Designated Member of Staff, working with the Head, to pass these concerns on to Social Services. This is an inescapable personal and professional responsibility for the protection of children from harm.

Supporting Children:

- We recognise that:
 - a child who has been abused, who witnesses abuse or lives with domestic violence or family breakdown or who otherwise receives inadequate parental care may feel helpless, humiliated, blame her/ himself and find it difficult to develop and maintain a feeling of self-worth;
 - the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may be unpredictable, challenging or defiant or significantly withdrawn;
 - school may provide the only stability and security in the lives of children who have been abused or at risk of harm;

We will endeavour to support our pupils by:

- encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in all aspects of school life, including through the curriculum;
- promote a safe, caring and positive ethos and environment within the school that gives pupils a sense of being valued;
- providing opportunities for pupils to talk about themselves, be listened to and feel confident about approaching adults if they are in difficulties;
- developing and implementing relevant policies, procedures and good practice for supporting vulnerable pupils in school;

- developing effective links and liaising with other children's support agencies such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service etc, in accordance with local procedures;
- following LSCB procedures for notifying social services as soon as there is a significant concern about a child's safety or well-being;
- contributing to multi-agency assessments of need, child protection plans and reviews;
- working in partnership with parents, as appropriate, and in accordance with LSCB child protection procedures and guidance;
- ensuring that, when a pupil on the child protection register leaves the school, their school file and confidential child protection file are transferred to the new school immediately, and that the child's social worker is informed.

Managing Allegations, Disclosures or Concerns:

- All staff should understand their responsibilities in being alert to signs of abuse, be familiar with the school's procedures for managing allegations, disclosures or concerns and understand their responsibility for referring any child protection or safeguarding concerns to the school's Designated Person.
- All staff should understand that an allegation of abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so it is imperative that nothing is done that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate allegations.

Confidentiality:

We recognize that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. However, all staff must be aware that:

- The designated person or Headteacher will disclose personal child protection information about a pupil to other members of staff only on a need-to-know basis;
- We must not promise to keep secrets which might compromise a child's safety or well-being, or that of another child;
- We have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard and protect children;
- We must respect children and families' rights to privacy and ensure that their personal matters are dealt with and communicated professionally and with due regard to Human Rights and Data Protection legislation.
- The designated person will always undertake to share the school's intention to refer a child to Social Services with the child's parent(s), unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.

Supporting staff:

- We recognise that children will disclose abuse at anytime and to anyone they feel comfortable telling. Staff who receive or deal with allegations or disclosures of child abuse and those who become involved in supporting a child who has suffered harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting and should be supported.
- We will support staff by providing opportunities to talk through their anxieties or concerns with the designated staff.
- The designated person should have access to advice, support, guidance, training and time to enable him/her to fulfil the role effectively.

- The school aims to reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct by raising awareness of all forms of abuse and providing child protection awareness training for all staff working with children, to be refreshed every three years.
- The designated child protection officer will have access to LSCB training in Inter-agency working and refresher training at 2 yearly intervals or less in line with current guidelines, to keep his/her knowledge up to date.
- The nominated governor and the governing body should have access to child protection awareness training to enable them to understand their responsibilities and perform their functions.

Allegations Against Staff:

- We recognise that because of our daily contact with children in a variety of situations, teachers, the headteacher and other staff working in the school are vulnerable to accusations of abuse.
- All allegations of abuse by a member of staff must be taken seriously and not dismissed as trivial, defamatory or not to be believed. It is essential that all allegations are reported in accordance with school Complaint Procedure Policy, are examined objectively and investigated professionally.
- Any member of staff facing an allegation of abuse needs to feel confident that appropriate, considered action will be taken in accordance with agreed school procedures.
- We understand that early action to establish the nature of an allegation should be undertaken in such a way that it does not prejudice any subsequent investigation or disciplinary action that may need to be carried out.
- Staff against whom an allegation has been made should not be automatically suspended. In the case of an immediate referral to a child protection agency, immediate suspension is more likely to be appropriate. In the case of unfounded allegations, suspension is unlikely.
- On the conclusion of any investigation of an allegation against a member of staff other than in the event of dismissal, appropriate advice, guidance, support, reassurance and help to rebuild confidence will be given to the member of staff concerned.

Whistleblowing:

- We recognise that pupils 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 about the attitude, actions or behaviour of colleagues where these may be breaching the safeguarding code of practice and consequently placing children at risk of harm.

Links with Other policies:

- This policy should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

Behaviour

Health and Safety/ICT /Internet Safety/use of Photographic Images

Anti- Bullying

Complaints Procedure Policy

Equal Opportunities

SEN

PSHE

School trips

Recruitment

Monitoring and Review:

- The governing body has responsibility for monitoring the school's compliance with this policy and associated procedures.

Policy written: February 2007.
Hazel Hosford – Designated CPO.

Review date: February 2008.

Summary Guidelines

BASIC ACTION POINTS

- ◆ Listen to children
- ◆ Give urgent initial consideration to whether there is substance in an allegation.
- ◆ Follow the specific procedures

HOW DO WE PROTECT OURSELVES ?

Through:

- Maintaining open and unambiguous behaviour towards children
- Following Codes of Behaviour and Procedures intended for the welfare and protection of children and ourselves
- Respecting the rights, needs and position of children within the school
- Not condoning inappropriate behaviour in others
- Taking action to safeguard children
- Resisting favouritism

1ST AID AFTER DISCLOSURE:

STAY CALM:

- try not to transmit your anger, shock, distress, embarrassment, to the child, either verbally or through body language.

BELIEVE THE CHILD

REASSURE THE CHILD:

- not your fault
- not the only one
- glad they told you

ALLOW CHILD TO TALK/FINISH STORY

- don't question the child

REPORT THE INCIDENT:

- explain to the child that you will need to talk to someone – whose job it is to help and protect children and that they will want to talk to child. Offer to stay with the child.

What To Do When A Child Makes an Allegation

The following information is intended to assist you if you become involved in a potential child protection situation when a child or young person makes an allegation:

- ❖ Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning or stopping them. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- ❖ When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.
- ❖ Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupils own words and pass to the designated teacher.
- ❖ Stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.
- ❖ Then report to designated teacher.