

Beaconsfield Primary School



Child Protection Policy

Agreed: September 2010
Review: September 2011

General

In Ealing and at Beaconsfield Primary Child Protection and the prevention of abuse is a key priority. Our commitment to equality of opportunity and an entitlement to learning for all means that we address Child Protection issues to ensure that our school is a safe and secure place for children and young people. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

The ethos of the school and the curriculum contributes to the prevention of and effective response to child abuse. It is essential that schools are aware of the needs of pupils from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds as well as the needs of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities who draw upon a variety of communication techniques. Everyone working here needs to be aware of their responsibilities in relation to the prevention and detection of child abuse, as well as the procedures recommended by the Local Education Authority for making a child protection referral (Refer to EGFL Procedures – Child protection).

Aims of our school policy

- To raise awareness of all staff, governors & volunteers of the need for child protection and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To have a structured internal procedure to be followed by all staff in cases of suspected abuse.
- Create a sensitive, caring, listening ethos which encourages them to confide in members of staff about their fears and anxieties.
- To promote inter-agency working relationships.
- To promote a systematic means of monitoring children thought to be at risk (vulnerable children).
- To support the development of the child/young person towards a positive self image thereby fostering and increasing their security, confidence and independence.
- To build on work of child protection within the curriculum so that it helps children protect themselves and develop responsible attitudes to adult life and parenthood.
- To ensure that there exists adequate mechanisms for offering ongoing support to staff members and children/young people involved in child protection cases.
- Provide a safe environment for children/young people to learn.

Policy objectives

Schools are most likely to have effective practice in relation to child protection when:

- Children feel secured, valued, encouraged to talk and listened to
- There is an ethos of mutual respect that underpins all interactions
- All adults take their responsibilities seriously, use close observation skills and notice the children in their care.
- Adults provide suitable welfare and guidance and are accessible
- Staff make parents aware of the school's responsibilities, policy and procedures
- Staff are trained and supported to be vigilant and to recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse
- Procedures are known to all staff carried out consistently; policy on confidentiality is maintained
- Practice is regularly reviewed and monitored

- All staff are aware of the different social and cultural patterns and practices of the school communities and are supported to consider their concerns in context
- Information is promptly passed on to relevant professions, when needed
- Children identified as being at risk are monitored; records are maintained of pupils' progress; reports are submitted when needed
- Relevant staff (preferably the Child Protection Leader) attends case conferences and are well prepared
- Up to date training on Child Protection is regularly offered to staff, governors and regular volunteers.
- New staff, newly qualified staff and temporary staff are given an induction to the school's procedures
- liaison with other agencies is encouraged and supported
- Teachers use the curriculum, particularly PSHE, to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others

Roles and responsibilities

There is one key principle that guides all professional responses to child protection issues. The Children Act 1989 asserts the absolute principle, that is: *the welfare of the child is paramount*. Therefore all staff should:

- Be aware of their contribution to provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils and to make appropriate provision for their welfare and guidance
- Be aware of the school policy and procedures
- Know who the CPL (Child Protection Lead) is and Deputy CPL is
 - ✓ Mr Dave Woods (Head Teacher) is the CPL
 - ✓ Ms. Sumen Starr (Assistant Head Teacher) is the Deputy CPL
- Create or contribute to the creation of a curriculum that enables children to develop self confidence, self esteem and the skills and understanding necessary to protect themselves and others

The designated child protection leader has a responsibility to:

- be fully aware of Local Authorities and School Child Protection procedures
- co-ordinate action on Child Abuse within the school
- ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to Child Protection
- organise and deliver training on all aspects of Child Protection for teaching and non teaching staff
- provide up to date information, advice and support to all staff
- adhere to procedures when reporting
- attend LA training
- be aware of and liaise with other agencies including the Education Social Worker who through the ESW service offers advice to schools
- attend case conferences and if it is impossible for him/her to attend, ensure that a substitute is adequately briefed and provide a written report for the child protection case conference
- take a major responsibility in supporting colleagues when a disclosure has been made
- ensure that the school passes on information *immediately* when a child changes schools, this includes transition between key stage 2 and key stage 3
- play the leading role in curriculum development in relation to Child Protection

- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Child Protection policy

Confidentially

As few people, as possible within the school should be informed when there is an incident regarding child protection. All staff that has regular contact in and outside the classroom might need to know there is a problem.

Do not promise confidentiality, as you will have to talk to other people and agencies:

- All staff in a school should be aware of the confidential nature of personal information.
- All staff should know how to maintain confidentiality.
- Personal information of a pupil nature should be given only to the CPL/Deputy CPL.
- Other staff only need to know as much as is necessary to act sensitively with a distressed child or young person. They do not need to know details.
- The teacher to whom the disclosure is made may need support in a confidential manner.

The pupil, depending on his/her age, should be kept informed of who knows, what they know, at all stages of the procedures.

It is essential that files containing information about alleged abuse are kept in a secure cabinet, and only accessed on a 'need to know' basis. (This filing cabinet is located in the HT office)

Recording

Clear records can be the basis of useful contributions to the case conference and possible court cases ensuring that sound decisions are made on the child's behalf. If there has been no disclosure or the child is too young or has a communication difficulty, monitoring and recording is particularly significant.

The Child Protection Leader will keep all notes on Child Protection issues in a secure file in the Head teachers' office.

Dealing with disclosures

Handling of the disclosure is critical to good child protection practice. For example; it may be the start of the healing process for the child or young person, or notes made at the time may be used in evidence later on. Disclosure can come from various sources, the person being abused, a friend, a parent or even the abuser.

The following points are important when dealing with a disclosure:

- Give the child or young person time to talk in a place where you will not be interrupted, if this is not possible agree on a specified time later;
- Take what the child or young person says serious – children rarely lie about abuse
- Inform the CPL as soon as possible (Record details on the "blue form")
- Stay calm; listen to the child without pressurising, without being judgemental or expressing anger or horror too strongly. The child may feel shame and guilt and may have feelings of love for the abuser, which can feel very confusing;

- Ask ‘open ended’ questions if it is necessary. Leading or probing questions may contaminate evidence needed in the future;
- Do not promise confidentiality: you will have to talk to the CPL and other agencies trust placed in you. Explain to the child that to safeguard her/him you will need to talk to someone else. Let the child know you will tell and what you have to do next and if it is possible make brief notes at the time on any paper that comes to hand;
- Record as soon as possible the content of the conversation (blue form + diagram)
 - i. separate out fact from opinion and record both;
 - ii. record any noticeable non-verbal behaviour; and
 - iii. record the actual words used by the child as far as possible rather than technical words and use a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or injury;
- Make sure you continue to support the child, providing a safe place and time throughout the process of the investigation and afterwards get some support for yourself. Do not disclose confidential information about the child or young person to colleagues, clearly, you must tell the CPL the details, as this is a part of the procedure and referral system.

It is vital to tell the designated teacher (CPL) of any concern about a child as soon as possible, in order that a decision to make a referral – or not – can be made. **School is NOT an investigative agency.** We must hand over this responsibility to the appropriate agencies.

Working in partnership

The concept of partnership between the parents/carers and the school is important. Parents are consulted regularly and often visit the school. When a case of abuse or suspected abuse has occurred, Social Services have generally been involved. This may leave parents/carers and teachers with a difficult relationship where both parties may feel ill at ease. We need to maintain an ethos where the need for privacy and confidentiality, within the boundaries of the child protection procedures, is overtly respected. Awareness of and respect for different cultural background and methods of parenting and family life are important to avoid narrow judgements about what constitutes ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parenting.

It is important that parents/carers are aware of the school’s policy on a child protection so that they know the responsibilities that the school has in this area. “Our first priority is your child’s welfare and therefore there may be occasions when our concern about your child means that we have to consult other agencies even before we contact you”. The procedures we follow have been laid down by the school and Local Authority.

Making a Referral

For child protection concerns the form is a follow up to the initial phone referral to Social Services contact centre on 020 8825 8000.

For children in need referrals the form can be used as an initial written referral.

Child Protection Referrals

<u>Procedures</u>	<u>Guidance</u>
<p>If unsure whether to refer you can consult Social Services by ringing the children’s referral and assessment team duty manager</p> <p>Greenford Duty Team Manager</p>	<p>**</p> <p>ACPC agencies have funded this post and when it is filled all agencies will be able to seek consultation and advice on referrals.</p>

0208 825 7331
admin 0208 825 6322

Acton duty Team Manager 0208 825 7742
Admin0208 825 6950

or by ringing the Social Services Child Protection Advisor**

1. Ring the Contact Centre (8 825 8000) and make a referral. Tell the Contact Centre that you need to discuss the referral with the Social Worker who will be assessing the allegation so that you can plan who will contact parent and when.

Note any reference number given and write it onto referral form.

2. Fax referral form to either Acton or Greenford Social Services office. Address and fax number are on the pro forma. Acton fax – 020 8992 0673, Greenford Fax – 020 8578 2654.

3. When contacted by the Social Worker discuss and plan what is to be said to the parent/s, by whom and when. Involve Social Services team managers and LEA designated child protection officer, if needed to reach agreement.

Agree attendance at strategy meeting if appropriate.

4. Confirm the agreed action on contacting parents in a fax to the Social Services office. Send with an instruction to add to schools referral form.

- Pull together information from all school staff.
- As long as it does not cause delay, prepare the referral form in advance of your phone referral as a way of organising your information and concerns.

- There may be questions on the form that you cannot answer.
- Fax the form as soon after your phone referral as possible and always within 48 hours.
- Section H on 'Supporting information' allows you to give facts and any opinion/judgements based on them to the extent that you have such information.

- National Guidance, supported by Dfes and DoH, is that

A) All agencies should tell parents about a referral unless the child is put at risk by doing so.

B) When you make your referral, agree with the recipient of the referral what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when.

Making this agreement ensures a discussion of the risks involved in telling parent/s of the referral.

The initial contact with parents requires careful planning and consideration, as it is crucial for ensuring the welfare of the child and co-operation of parents.

The discussion with social services will decide on one of the following options

- 1) The threshold for assessment/investigation has not been met and no action will be taken. School should then tell parent/s that they have consulted social services and that social services and possibly other agencies are available to offer help and support.
- 2) There will be an assessment/investigation but there is no risk in telling the parent/s about the referral. School will then need to plan how and when to discuss with parent. Parent/s can be advised that they can contact social services for help and discussion

- 3) There will be an assessment/investigation and

<p>5. Social services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it, so if you have not heard back within 3 working days, contact social services again.</p>	<p>there is no risk in telling parents as long as they can be advised of the details of when social services will contact them. This is to reduce parents' anxiety and consequent risk to the child.</p> <p>4) There will be an assessment/investigation and the parent should not be told of the referral. The first strategy meeting will decide how best to inform the parent/s</p> <p>This option will always be the case in allegations of sexual abuse, and/or where social services hold information not known to school. The possibility of such information is the reason all referrals should initially be discussed with social services before contacting parent/s.</p> <p>Whatever option is agreed the school will at some stage have to advise parent/s of the referral as they will usually have to maintain an ongoing relationship with them</p>
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Have the following information available when you telephone (but do not delay if all the information is not available):

- Your name, designation, school's address and telephone number
- Child's name, date of birth, home address and details of other family or household members
- Ethnic origin of the child and family, the language spoken
- Details of the concern
- Details of the incident, e.g. date, time, what the referral was told and by whom, what they heard of, observed, what they said or did
- The nature of the child's relationship with the referrer
- The child's past and current circumstances and behaviour
- Details of any agencies known to be involved
- Whether or not the parents/guardians have been informed.

Ensure all copies of forms sent and completed are completed are copied and stored in the Child Protection folder held within the Head teacher's office. Ensure that the Record of Children subject to a Child Protection Plan is completed at the front of the School Safeguarding Folder.

The following agencies may be involved:

- Social Services
- Health Services
- Police
- Educational Psychologist
- Clinical Psychologist
- Educational Welfare Services

A coherent approach is needed. This involves all the services to work together. It is a legal requirement and is in the best interest of the child being served. The CPL/deputy CPL

should be clear about his/her functions and tasks in the process and have an understanding of those of other services. They should also establish clear lines of communication.

Supporting abused children in school

The development of self esteem is a fundamental need for all pupils. For those who have been abused it is necessary for self-esteem work to be more focused and broken down into manageable parts.

The following tasks/activities/way of treating the child or young person is suggestions of support that may be appropriate:

- Have regular routines, be consistent and reliable and set clearly defined limits
- set task/activities that are achievable
- offer opportunities for the pupil to demonstrate competence
- take care to notice differences in the child
- provide opportunities for the child to give and receive positive feedback from peers
- create a safe and structured way to explore feelings and values
- respond with warmth, tolerance and dignity and maintain the child's dignity and
- Help the child or young person feel a sense of control over their lives.

Staff who are involved may need support themselves. Staff may be supported in the following ways:

- Recognition – the teacher involved will need time to adjust and reflect on events
- Recognition of the emotional impact on staff involved in an allegation or investigation of abuse
- Thinking through appropriate levels of support giving time out to talk it through
- Provide access to individual or whole staff counselling if needed
- Denial – staff dealing with abuse can find themselves confronted with facts they do not like and experience distress or strong emotional reactions. A common reaction to this is denial – denial can be personal or institutional. All staff will receive training to help them deal effectively with the incident.

Supporting staff

- We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child 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 Designated Teacher and to seek further support as appropriate.

Allegations against staff

(see separate policy)

Review

This policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff and will be presented to the governing body for agreement.

The Head teacher and staff will review this policy in September 2011. Amendments will be presented to the Governing Body for review and approval.

Dave Woods (Head Teacher)
September 2010

Appendix 1

Categories of abuse

Some forms of abuse have no obvious signs, for example a child who is being abused may communicate stress in a different way, e.g. by hiding it. Schools need to be aware of what implications there may be for children from different ethnic backgrounds, or children with disabilities or special educational needs or pupils with a variety of differing communication techniques.

Listing signs and symptoms are ways of raising awareness of possible abuse, but there is often an overlap between signs and symptoms of different types of abuse. **(See interagency guidelines for further details).**

Under the Children's Act, Social Services are required to investigate if they have reasonable cause to believe a child in their area is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Significant harm must be viewed as part of categories – sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Always remember that there can be other explanations for such signs or behaving in such ways.

Physical Abuse

The actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy, where the nature of the injury is not consistent with the explanation given by either the child or the parent OR there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is caused by persistent and/or severe emotional rejection or ill treatment. It affects the child or young person's behaviour and development. It is often difficult to substantiate. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependant and/or developmentally immature.

This can include penetration of a child's vagina, anus or mouth with a finger, penis or other objects; touching, rubbing or stroking or kissing of a child by an adult in a sexual manner; and adults or another child. Sexual abuse can also be an adult encouraging a child to watch or read pornographic material or making sexual suggestions to a child.

The following are always underlying factors that are present in sexual abuse: the inability of the child or young person to give their informed consent and the imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator.

Indicators may be:

- Bruising/injury in an unusual area
- Spotting of blood
- Withdrawal / aggressive behaviour
- Frequent urination/infections/soiling
- Mouth infections
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of that child's health or development. Exposure to danger or repeated failure to attend to a child's physical and developmental needs constitutes neglect.

Neglect and emotional abuse

- Medical/health needs of the child may not be attended to, e.g. sight testing, hearing, dental or skin conditions, general hygiene.
- Daily routines are neglected over an extended period, e.g. homework not done/lack of PE kits/response to letters/poor lunch content
- Physical ailments such as stress rashes
- Slowing of growth without a medical cause may be indicative of emotional neglect or abuse and occurs even when a child is not deprived of food. However, the weight may remain appropriate for the height but disproportionate for age. There is usually a dramatic increase in growth following removal of an abused child from abuser/s.
- Uncharacteristic withdrawal/thumb sucking or attention seeking behaviours.
- Dishevelled or unclean clothing on a regular basis.
- Inappropriate clothing e.g. no socks/sandals in cold/wet weather
- Extreme tiredness