

CHINTHURST SCHOOL



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PMAP09
ReviewAP10

CHILD PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

Chinthurst School adheres to the principles outlined in the Children Act 1989 believing that all children have a right to be protected from abuse. It is the intention of the procedures within this policy to ensure that the appropriate action is taken immediately where it is alleged that a pupil is suspected of being abused. The prime concern at all times must be the interests and safety of the pupil(s).

Chinthurst School follows the guidance laid out in the Surrey Child Protection Committee "Manual of Child Protection Procedures".

All staff at Chinthurst School recognise that they have a pastoral responsibility towards all of the pupils and that the pupils have a fundamental right to feel safe and to be protected from harm. Staff also recognise that they are able to help prevent the abuse of children through the curriculum, by enabling pupils to acquire relevant information and attitudes to resist abuse in their own lives. However, although staff accept that they have an important role to play at the recognition and referral stages of child protection, it is not their responsibility to investigate suspected abuse or neglect.

The school will ensure that there will be a Designated Senior Person/CPLO and at least one. These designated people will be trained every two years. Training will be given to the whole staff regularly (including voluntary, part time and peripatetic staff), but at the very least every 3 years. This will be built in to the staff inset programme..

Peter Mulhern (Assistant Headmaster) is the CPLO and there is one Deputy Officer within the EYFS setting. The CPLO is trained every 2 years in accordance with national guidelines. All other school staff receive regular training as part of school inset.

The Nominated Governor Mr Andrew Bissett (chairman of Governors) is responsible for ensuring that the school has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education – January 2007". He undertakes to meet with the CPLO (Peter Mulhern) and the Headmaster Mr Ian Thorpe to carry out an annual review of the child protection policy and procedures. As part of this review, the child protection arrangements are tested for any weaknesses which are then remedied without delay. Any changes to the child protection policy and procedures are presented to the Governors at the next Governors' meeting.

AIMS

In order to provide an environment where all the pupils at Chinthurst feel secure, and are listened to in confidence, we:

1. follow an accepted code of practice relating to all aspects of contact between staff and children.
2. ensure that all staff are able to recognise signs of symptoms of suspected abuse.
3. have a clear procedure and a line of communication in the event of suspected abuse.
4. practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

- A child or young person up to the age of 18 years is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse by parents or carers when the basic needs of the child are not being met through avoidable acts which have caused or placed the child at risk or harm. Harm is defined by The Children Act 1989 as ill treatment or the impairment of health or development.
- Child abuse and harm are classified with the following categories which are also used as registration for the Child Protection Committee.

CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE AND THEIR SYMPTOMS

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Department of Health, Home Office and DfEE (1999)
Child abuse can be categorised into four distinct types:

1. **Physical Abuse:**
2. **Sexual Abuse:**
3. **Emotional Abuse:**
4. **Physical Neglect:**

INDICATORS

1. Physical Abuse

This involves physical injury to a child, where there is definite knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Typical signs of physical abuse are:

- bruises and abrasions -
- slap marks –
- twin bruises on either side of the mouth or cheeks - can be caused by pinching or grabbing, sometimes to make a child eat or to stop a child from speaking.
- bruising on both sides of the ear – this is often caused by grabbing a child that is attempting to run away.
- grip marks on arms or trunk -
- black eyes -
- damage to the mouth - e.g. bruised/cut lips or torn skin
- bite marks.
- fractures - in children less than 2 years.
- poisoning and other misuse of drugs - e.g. overuse of sedatives.
- burns and/or scalds -

2. Sexual Abuse

Typical signs of Sexual Abuse are:

- a detailed sexual knowledge inappropriate to the age of the child.
- behaviour that is excessively affectionate or sexual towards other children or adults.
- attempts to inform by making a disclosure about the sexual abuse often begin by the initial sharing of limited information with an adult. It is also very characteristic of such children that they have an excessive pre-occupation with secrecy and try to bind the adults to secrecy or confidentiality.
- a fear of medical examinations.
- a fear of being alone – this applies to friends/family/neighbours/baby-sitters, etc.
- a sudden loss of appetite, compulsive eating, anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa.
- excessive masturbation is especially worrying when it takes place in public.
- promiscuity.
- unusually explicit or detailed sex play in young children.
- sexual approaches or assaults - on other children or adults.
- urinary tract infections (UTI), sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- bruising to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen, thighs and genital/rectal areas.
- discomfort or pain particularly in the genital or anal areas.
- the drawing of pornographic or sexually explicit images.

3. Emotional Abuse

The severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.

4. Physical Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Persistent stomach-aches, feeling unwell, and apparent anorexia can be associated with Physical neglect. However, typical signs of Physical Neglect are:

- Underweight –
- Inadequately clad - a distinction needs to be made between situations where children are inadequately clad, dirty or smelly because they come from homes where neatness and cleanliness are unimportant and those where the lack of care is preventing the child from thriving.

Physical Neglect is a difficult category because it involves the making of a judgement about the seriousness of the degree of neglect. Much parenting falls short of the ideal but it may be appropriate to invoke child protection procedures in the case of neglect where the child's development is being adversely affected.

Situations of Grave Concern (at risk)

Grave concern may be felt where a child shows symptoms of stress and distress (see below) and any of the following circumstances apply:

- there is a known child abuser in the family;
- another child in the family is known to have been abused;
- the parents are involved with pornographic material to an unusual degree;
- there is an adult in the family with a history of violent behaviour.

These different types of abuse require different approaches. A child suffering from physical abuse may be in immediate and serious danger. Action should, therefore, be taken immediately. With other forms of abuse there is a need to ensure that adequate information is gathered. There is also a need to make sure that grounds for suspicion have been adequately investigated and recorded. The need to collate information must be balanced against the need for urgent action.

If there are reasonable grounds for suspicion then a decision to monitor the situation should only be taken after consultation. A situation that should cause particular concern is that of a child who fails to thrive without any obvious reason. In such a situation a medical investigation will be required to consider the causes.

The Symptoms of Stress and Distress:

An abused child is likely to show signs of stress and distress as listed below:

- a lack of concentration and a fall-off in school performance;
- aggressive or hostile behaviour;
- moodiness, depression, irritability, listlessness, fearfulness, tiredness, temper tantrums, short concentration span, acting withdrawn or crying at minor occurrences;
- difficulties in relationships with peers;
- regression to more immature forms of behaviour, e.g. thumb sucking;
- self harming or suicidal behaviour;
- low self esteem;
- wariness, insecurity, running away or truancy - children who persistently run away from home may be escaping from sexual/physical abuse;
- disturbed sleep;
- general personality changes such as unacceptable behaviour or severe attention seeking behaviour;
- a sudden change in school performance.

Parental Signs of Child Abuse

Particular forms of parental behaviour that could raise or reinforce concerns are:

- implausible explanations of injuries;
- unwillingness to seek appropriate medical treatment for injuries;
- injured child kept away from school until injuries have healed without adequate reason;
- a high level of expressed hostility to the child;
- grossly unrealistic assumptions about child development;
- general dislike of child-like behaviour;
- inappropriate labelling of child's behaviour as bad or naughty;
- leaving children unsupervised when they are too young to be left unattended.

If concerns are raised that a child may be suffering harm Social Services with other agencies must make inquiries to ensure that the child is properly cared for and safe. Parents should be told what the concerns are and usually a Social Worker and possibly a Police Officer will visit the family. If they decide there are no concerns they may offer support or take no further action.

DETECTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN SCHOOL

- By staff noticing physical or behavioural symptoms
- By children disclosing information
- By a sustainable allegation from a third party

GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Although you may not seek information a pupil may wish to confide in you about having suffered some kind of abuse. In such situations the following guidelines taken from KIDSCAPE should be helpful:

- Always stop and listen attentively to anyone who wants to tell you about an incident or suspicion of abuse.
- Find somewhere quiet to talk as soon as possible
- Stay calm and re-assuring
- Do not ask leading questions or impose your own interpretations upon what you are being told. Do not, for example, ask “Did he touch you?” or “Did he say anything to you?” etc. Let the person know you are concerned and understanding and stick to asking them to tell you what it is they want to say. Only prompt them by saying, “Is there anything else you might want to add?”
- Listen to and believe what the pupil tells you – tell them that, whatever the circumstances, they are not to blame
- Do not make a promise of confidentiality or secrecy. You need to make it clear that you have a responsibility to report the concern so that action can be taken and the child can be helped. You can reassure the person that only those who need to know will be told.
- Tell the pupil you are pleased he has decided to tell someone and that this was the right thing to do
- Let the pupil know you understand how difficult it is to talk about such experiences
- Keep a written record of the conversation. If it is appropriate, you can make a verbatim record of what you are told at the time, but if this is inhibiting then make those notes as soon as possible after the conversation. It is important to keep those original notes intact.

SCHOOL PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED

CPLO (Whole School) – Peter Mulhern Deputy (EYFS) – Jade Newman

- All concerns to be reported to and recorded by the class teacher in conjunction with support staff and/or other adults involved.
- Class teacher to refer immediately to the designated teacher and the Headmaster.
- If the Headmaster is not available the CPLO will refer to the Assistant Head and the Governor with the Child Protection responsibility.
- Headmaster to observe and assess the nature of the concern in the presence of the class teacher and any other members of staff who may be involved.
- Further information may then be sought from the child, tactfully and sympathetically, by an appropriate adult together with the Headmaster.
- Headmaster will then follow the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Procedure and, at the same time, notify the designated member of the Board of Governors and Allegations Manager (Schools and Education Establishments) - Sue Herbert 01372 833341, 07968 834948 or sue.herbert@surreycc.gov.uk within 24 hours. Referrals can also be made to Surrey Contact Centre on 08456 009 009 during the working day and out of office hours or urgent referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517898.
- In situations where there are very unspecific concerns, it may be appropriate to monitor and record the nature of these concerns and to be vigilant in keeping records over a period of time.
- In situations where it is believed that there is abuse of a pupil by one, or more, other pupils a thorough and immediate investigation must be carried out by the CPLO, Headmaster and Class Teachers. All parties involved must be included and parents informed where appropriate.
- The incident book should be referred to during the investigation.
- If there is a concern about a member of staff or other person working in the school, a senior member of staff must be informed immediately. The senior member of staff must record this meeting and if he/she has any concerns must then inform the CPLO and the Headmaster. Any concern should then be discussed, through consultation or referral, with the local Social Service office. If an inquiry is considered necessary, the level of concern will determine whether suspension is appropriate. In the event of an allegation, suspension is necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY, REPORTS AND RECORDS

The need to protect the child is of paramount importance. However, staff have a professional responsibility to share appropriate information with other professionals. Promises of confidence should never be made as they represent a potential breach of trust. Reassurance can be given that only those who need to know will be told.

At all times the priority lies with the child's welfare and safety.

Confidentiality means not withholding information that should be shared and not sharing information unless there is a clear need to know.

In all cases of concern, a record should be made (within 24 hours) including details of observations of the incident or behaviour, where it took place, when it took place, with whom, the sequence of behaviour, any other relevant signs or symptoms and the context in which this took place.

The record should also include specific decisions about the nature of the record being kept and what is intended to be done with the record, such as reporting back to the other agencies and, when appropriate, with the parents.

When it is appropriate, a verbatim record of a conversation or interview may be made at the time. However, if this is inhibiting or inappropriate, a written record should be made within 24 hours of the conversation.

All written records and reports will be kept securely locked in the Assistant Headmaster's office.

In such cases, when there is nothing to substantiate any abusive behaviour and the concern is considered to have no foundation, records may be destroyed after the child has left the school.

The central principle of The Children Act 1989 is that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration and all concerns should be treated seriously. A school with an open and protective culture where all feel safe and free to talk will provide the best environment for the protection of the child.

INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY (ISA)

Any person leaving the school (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children must be reported to the ISA (PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA – tel. 03001231111) within one month of leaving.

Ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation, and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.

Reports must include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible. Failure to make a report constitutes an offence and the school may be removed from the DCSF register of independent schools. 'Compromise agreements' cannot apply in this connection.