

# WESSEX PRIMARY SCHOOL

## POLICY DOCUMENT - CHILD PROTECTION

### Introduction

This policy document outlines the purpose, nature and management of child protection. In drawing up this policy the teaching and non teaching staff, the governors, social services and the school child protection officer were consulted. It has the full agreement of the Governing Body who approved it at their meeting in July 2007. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff and will be monitored by the Headteacher and the nominated child protection officer. The policy will be reviewed regularly.

This policy sits in conjunction with the schools policies on Confidentiality and PSHCE which includes policies on the teaching and management of Sex and Relationships and Drugs.

Wessex Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. Staff recognise that all children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the key outcomes to children's well being encapsulated in the Every Child Matters agenda, which are to:

- Stay safe.
- Be healthy.
- Enjoy and achieve.
- Make a positive contribution.
- Achieve economic well-being.

Staff at the school believe they have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils under the Education Act 2002 and where appropriate under the Education Act 1989.

The Children Act 2004 requires:

- each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- the creation of children's trusts under the duty to co-operate.
- the duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The procedures outlined in this policy are those described in the Child Protection Handbook, Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards 2006 (BLSC).

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school and covers all the pupils in the school, in particular *Looked After Children, Asylum Seekers, all children who are at risk and vulnerable*. (See appendix)

### Management

In every school there is a designated person - the Headteacher or another senior member of the staff to whom the responsibility has been delegated - who has the responsibility, under the procedures locally established, for co-ordinating action within the school and for liaison with other agencies. In this school the designated person is Mrs Ann Leigh who is also the nominated governor responsible for child protection.

A copy of the relevant handbook is available in the Hearing Resource Base. A further copy is kept in the Headteacher's office and the Deputy Headteacher's office. Every member of staff including temporary staff, volunteers and governors knows the name of the designated person and their role. All staff including administrative staff are given opportunities to attend courses in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### Aims

Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils under the Education Act 2002 and under the Children Act 1989 by

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people. This means having effective arrangements in place to cover dealing with such things as child protection, pupil health and safety, pupils with medical conditions, bullying, providing first aid, school security, tackling drugs and residential trips.
- Identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of referral procedures within the school.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe within the curriculum especially via PSHCE. Schools play an important role in making children aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable, and of how they can keep themselves safe. The framework for PSHCE provides opportunities for children to learn about keeping safe.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Monitor children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Ensuring that outside agencies are involved where appropriate.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- Ensuring staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of child abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.

#### **School Procedures in Case of Suspected Abuse**

- Whenever any member of the school staff has reason to suspect that a pupil may have suffered abuse, the designated person, Mrs Ann Leigh, or in her absence the Headteacher, should be informed. This duty persists even if the child has been removed from the school following allegations made by the child against the parent. It should be made clear to students that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in respect of child protection issues. Sharing of information in cases of concern about children's welfare enables professionals to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child. Professionals need to consider their legal obligations, including whether they have a duty of confidentiality to the child. The child's best interests must be the overriding consideration in making decisions.
- The Child Protection Officer and Headteacher will then decide on an appropriate course of action (based on Local Safeguarding Children Boards).
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Information for parents/carers will be publicised to tell them that the staff are required to follow the procedures laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

#### **Dealing with Disclosures of Abuse**

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support the child:

- Stay calm and be available to listen.
- Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying.
- Question normally without pressurising.
- Don't put words into the child's mouth but note the main points carefully.
- Keep a full record – date, time, what the child did, said, etc.
- Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us.
- Inform the child that this information will have to be passed on.
- Immediately inform the Child Protection Officer, or when absent the Headteacher.
- Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences or the criminal/civil courts.
- Consequently records and reports should be:
  - factual (no opinions)
  - judgemental (no assumptions)
  - clear
  - accurate

- relevant

For types of Child Abuse and their symptoms please refer to Appendix.

### **Monitoring and Record Keeping**

It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. These records should then be kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's school records. (They are secured in the Hearing Resource Base). It is important to recognise that regulations published in 1989 do not authorise or require the disclosure to parents of any written information relating to Child Protection. Although the preferred practice is for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made (unless the referral relates to Sexual Abuse).

Staff must keep the Child Protection Officer informed of:

- Poor attendance & punctuality.
- Concerns about appearance and dress.
- Changed or unusual behaviour.
- Concerns about health and emotional well being.
- Deterioration in educational progress.
- Discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child.
- Concerns about home conditions or situations.
- Concerns about pupil on pupil abuse (including serious bullying)

When there is suspicion of significant harm to a child and a referral is made as much information as possible should be given about the nature of the suspicions, the child and the family.

Any referral to Social Services by telephone must be confirmed on the specified form and a copy kept on the confidential school file.

Any initial concerns or observations should be recorded and dated on the relevant form, copies of which are attached to this policy. All relevant paperwork is stored securely in the Hearing Resource Base.

### **Roles, Responsibilities and Duties of Staff**

- In order to ensure effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all new staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people the schools Recruitment Practices have been updated. HR have identified all posts that require a CRB check and it is essential that all pre employment checks are completed. It is essential that Governors fulfil their statutory responsibility to ensure that schools have effective recruitment and selection processes in place. Governors are accountable and must know their policies and procedures safeguard against employing unsuitable people. They will need to record the impact of the implementation of their policies and procedures on the SEF form.
- To ensure correct procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers
- To ensure that all staff know the Child Protection Officer is responsible (and in her absence the Headteacher) for Child Protection issues and that this person may be contacted for advice.
- The designated person, in liaison with the Headteacher, should collate the information available and make a judgement about what action is necessary, consistent with the procedures in the Child Protection Handbook.
- To refer promptly all cases of suspected child abuse to the local social services department or the police child protection team. If a parent arrives to collect the child before the social worker has arrived then it must be remembered that we have no right to prevent the removal of the child. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, the Police should be called. Parent's permission should be sought before discussing a referral about them with other agencies, unless permission seeking may place the child at increased risk of significant harm.
- In emergencies, when medical advice or treatment is thought to be urgently needed, the designated teacher should refer the pupil to the pupil's own hospital - a preliminary call to the Paediatric Department will ensure a quick response. The person accompanying the child should take an explanatory letter and referral should not be delayed because the parent or social worker cannot be contacted.
- To organise regular training on Child Protection within the School.

- To ensure that all staff know about and have access to LSCB guidelines.
- To co-ordinate action where child abuse is suspected.
- To facilitate and support the development of a whole school policy on Child Protection.
- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his/her behalf.
- To maintain records of case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure confidential file and to disseminate information about the child only on a “need to know basis”.
- To pass on records and inform the key worker when a child who is on the Child Protection register leaves the school. To raise staff awareness and confidence on child protection procedures and to ensure new staff are aware of these procedures.
- To keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities wherever possible.
- To maintain effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences)
- To pass on to the key worker or the CP Coordinator (Social Services) information about significant changes affecting a child on the CP register (Social Services will be notified if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register).
- To ensure there are written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- To be aware that the role of staff does not include investigating possible abuse or neglect. They should rather refer concerns, provide information for investigation and contribute to assessments when required to do so.

### **Other Procedural Advice**

#### **Allegations against school staff.**

- Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one-to-one basis with students, and staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions could sometimes be misconstrued. (Please refer to the Schools Physical Restraint Policy).
- Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Child Protection Officer or Headteacher so that procedures can be followed. If the allegation is against the Headteacher it should be taken directly to the Deputy Headteacher and through her to the Chair of Governors. If there are possible allegations against a member of staff it is essential that guidance should be obtained from a member of HR, so that Child Protection and the relevant personnel procedures act in a coordinated manner.
- If a member of staff has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence or behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children, then the Headteacher should report it to the LA. The head should not investigate the allegation at this stage.
- The Headteacher, acting in loco parentis, may in certain circumstances (namely, when a parent is the suspected abuser), and at request of the statutory agencies (ie the Police or the Social Services Department), authorise arrangements (without prior parental agreement) for an interview to take place in school. If this is deemed necessary then before allowing it to happen the Headteacher or his or her representative should consult Pupil Services at the Town Hall for advice (01628 798888). Legal advice must be sought regarding any arrangements if the pupil is to be interviewed other than on school premises. The pupil should be accompanied by a trusted adult. Parents should be informed about the concern and its investigation.
- Because bruising or other signs of injury may quickly begin to fade, expert diagnosis may need to be arranged urgently. The designated person, where the circumstances require it, should ensure that the social worker dealing with the case is properly informed so that the procedures regarding arrangements for medical examination can be immediately applied.
- The designated person should ensure that any members of staff involved make a record, as soon as possible, of details which may be required as evidence (e.g. what was said by the child, signs of injury, etc.), and that the relevant records are maintained in the school. Information relating to actual, alleged or suspected child abuse is exempted from the provisions regarding the disclosure of pupil records.
- If it is thought inappropriate to refer to the ‘designated person’ for the school, for example where that person is implicated and alternative procedures are not available, or where the

expression of previous concern has not resulted in adequate protection, the member of staff should make direct contact with the Social Services Department.

- The school, including nursery school, can expect to be notified promptly by the Social Services Department of the inclusion of a child's name on the child protection register. The details notified will normally include the legal status and placement of the child, the name of the key worker and where possible what information has been made known to the parents about any allegations or suspicions of abuse. Schools will wish to pay particular attention to the attendance and development of such children and the designated teacher should report any cause for further concern to the Social Services Department.
- The Social Services Department will routinely inform the school of any decision to remove the child from the child protection register, of termination of a legal order or any change in the status of the placement of the child. The Social Services Department will inform the school when a child, who is already on the child protection register, starts school. When a child on the child protection register changes school, the information should be transferred between schools immediately and the key worker informed.
- Information for parents/carers is publicised to parents. They are informed that the School is committed to promoting the health and welfare of all pupils and if staff see signs that suggest that one of the pupils may have been the victim of abuse (or is at risk of abuse) staff will follow the procedures laid down by the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards, and that a full version of the School's Child Protection policy is available on request.
- Corporal punishment is outlawed for all pupils. The law forbids a teacher or other member of staff from using any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or that is primarily intended to cause pain, injury or humiliation.
- Teachers are allowed to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils under certain circumstances. Other staff may also do so, in the same way as teachers, provided they have been authorised by the Headteacher to have control or charge of pupils.

### **Further General Advice**

Education Department staff (and particularly teachers) may be well placed to identify significant changes in a child's attitude and behaviour. In matters of such difficulty and sensitivity, if help, guidance and reassurance are needed, school staff should in the first place approach the designated person or the Head teacher. Further guidance and assistance can be obtained from the CP Co-ordinator (Social Services), or, within the Education Department, from the Principal Education Welfare Officer, or the Head of Pupil Support Services who is the LEA designated person. In addition, one of the Senior Education Advisers is the principal source of advice about educational materials and approaches which may be useful when working with young people to affect their attitudes and this helps prevent the abuse of children in the future.

AL May 2007

### **References**

Child Protection Handbook - Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards 2006  
Safeguarding Children in Education, September 2004.  
Safeguarding Children in Education November 2005.  
[www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/saferrecruitment)  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/10\\_98/summary.htm](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/10_98/summary.htm)  
Education Act 1989  
Education Act 2002  
Children Act 2004  
Working Together to Safeguard Children

Appendix 1 - Glossary

Appendix 2 - Categories of Neglect and Abuse

## APPENDIX 1

### Glossary

<b>Terms used</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Abuse and neglect	Forms of maltreatment of a child
Bullying	Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, includes physical, verbal and emotional
Child	Anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday
Child protection	Process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect
Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)	Agency OF the Home Office, help employers make safer recruitment decisions
Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB)	Established by the LA for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality
Looked after children	Children in care
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	Protecting children from maltreatment Preventing impairment of children's health or development Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
s17 of the Children's Act 1989	Children in need\who are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health of development, or their health and development will be impaired
s47 of the Children's Act 1989	Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm
Significant harm	Physical harm, abuse, neglect, emotional, sexual, degree of threat, coercion, sadism. May be a single event or longstanding which damage the child's physical and psychological development
Vulnerable Children	Children living away from home, in foster care, in hospital, in custody, disabled children, children who are bullied, children whose behaviour indicates a lack of parental control, children who have experienced racial discrimination or domestic violence, children of drug-misusing parents, children who have been abused linked to witchcraft or other spiritual beliefs, Looked After children, children of families living in temporary accommodation, migrant children, child victims of trafficking and unaccompanied asylum seeking children

## APPENDIX 2

### Categories of Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse can be categorised into four distinct types which are:

#### 1) Physical Abuse

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

#### 2) Emotional abuse

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:
- Conveying to a child that s/he is worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person
- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations e.g. interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, preventing the child from participation in normal social interaction
- Causing a child to feel frightened or in danger e.g. witnessing domestic violence, seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- Exploitation or corruption of a child
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

#### 3) Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. 'Penetrative acts' include 'rape' (the forced penetration of vagina, anus or mouth with a penis) and 'assault by penetration' (penetrate sexually the vagina or anus of a child with a part of the body or an object).
- Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children in looking at, or in production of abusive images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This may include the use of photographs, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings e.g. the internet, books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CD's
- Children under 16 years of age cannot lawfully consent to any sexual activity occurring, although in practice young people may be involved in sexual contact to which, as individuals, they may have agreed (see 10.16 and 10.17).
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#### 4) Neglect

- Neglect involves 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 and development.
- Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse
- Once the child is born, neglect may involve failure to:
  - Protect from physical and emotional harm or danger
  - Meet or respond to basic emotional needs
  - Ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers.
  - Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment.