

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Headteacher: Mr Shawn Fell

Designated Teacher: Mrs Linda Skinner

Reserve Designated Staff: Mrs Val Purnell & Mrs Sharon Allen

Nominated Governor: Mrs Sharon Hose

Mission Statement

Harlington Upper School believes that a caring school promotes the welfare, health, safety and guidance of every child. We fully recognise our responsibilities for safeguarding children and procedures are in place to deal with incidents, consistent with local Safeguarding Children Board guidance, Safeguarding Children in Education(September 2004), Every Child Matters and Change for Children 2004.

Statutory Framework

All schools are required to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the local Safeguarding Children Board. All schools have a duty to promote and safeguard children's welfare. Schools are expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse – these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused or suspected of abuse.

As well as these statutory duties, we have a pastoral responsibility towards our pupils. Pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. Children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. There are five elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe, warm, creative environment which will support children to learn and develop, and work towards the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (in particular to Stay Safe)

POLICY

AIMS

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

- All staff (teaching and non teaching) should be alert to signs of abuse, know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions and understand their responsibilities.
- Staff with designated responsibility for child protection have received appropriate training and will undertake refresher training at least every two years.
- Parents should have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection as set out in the school prospectus and are informed of the existence of our policy.
- The Designated Teacher has responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.

Our aim is to create a warm, supportive environment in which:-

- Children feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- We support all our students to work towards the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and in particular to Stay Safe
- Children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- A member of staff has been designated specifically to follow the guidance of the local Safeguarding Children Board, Safeguarding Children in Education (September 2004) and Every Child Matters, Change for Children 2004.
- Staff are aware of the need to safeguard children and to understand their responsibility in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse. All staff (teaching and non-teaching) take part in in-service training courses which lead to a greater understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- The prevention of child abuse is encouraged through teaching which builds awareness of the dangers of abuse, particularly through the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum.
- Through our links to other policies, for example sex and relationships/anti-bullying, we will help to develop self-esteem and self-assertiveness in our students.
- Liaison with other agencies involved in the protection of children is encouraged.
- There is systematic monitoring of children thought to be at risk.

PROCEDURES

Our school procedures for safeguarding children are in line with Local Safeguarding Board guidance and Safeguarding Children in Education 2004. The Headteacher and Designated Teacher both hold copies of the **Bedfordshire Manual of Child Protection Procedures**.

School Procedures

- If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform Linda Skinner.
- Information regarding the concerns must be recorded by the member of staff on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations, using appendix 1.
- Linda Skinner will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Child Care Duty Desk. If it is decided to make a referral to Social Services this will not usually be done without prior discussion with the parents.
- If a referral is made to Social Services, Linda Skinner will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to the Social Worker dealing with the case within 48 hours.
- If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school, Linda Skinner will inform the Social Worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.
- Safe recruitment practices in line with the Bichard Recommendations are always followed and the headteacher has undertaken training in safer recruitment. All new members of staff including supply staff are checked in line with government guidelines and are referred to our safeguarding procedures as part of their induction.
- Good record keeping systems are in place and a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm is provided. Child protection records are kept confidentially and securely separate from pupil records.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Education Psychology Service.

Responsibilities

The designated member(s) of staff is (are) responsible for:

- Carrying out child protection procedures in accordance with the Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Manual of Procedures and Safeguarding Children in Education 2004.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make immediate referral (Significant Harm Policy).
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records.
- Monitoring the attendance of any student on the child protection register and referring concerns when appropriate to the Education Welfare Service in the first instance. Where concerns remain the social worker for the family will be informed.
- Ensuring that all school staff teaching and non teaching are trained and receive refresher training every three years.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Nominating a governor who received training to have responsibility for child protection.
- Ensuring child protection is a standing item on the agenda for Governors' meetings.
- Reviewing the policies and procedures annually.
- Remedying any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to its attention, without delay.
- Ensuring that the Chair liaises with the Local Authority/Partner Agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the headteacher.

Confidentiality

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential and staff are informed on a need to know basis.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise child confidentiality.

When to be concerned

If a child:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
- Discloses that they are to be forced to marry (under **no** circumstances should such a disclosure be discussed with parents or other family members).

Dealing with a disclosure

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.

- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Social Services.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions.
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions.
- Not criticise the perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Record Keeping

When a pupil has disclosed the member of staff should:-

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child.
- Indicate on the diagram, available from Linda Skinner, the position of any bruising or other injury (do not attempt to photograph any injury).
- Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- Written records of referrals or concerns must be kept secure, separate from the main pupil file, in a locked location.

Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child and a child protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with Linda Skinner.

Allegations Against School Staff

Whilst school staff are uniquely placed to detect signs and indicators of child abuse, they are themselves particularly vulnerable to malicious or misplaced allegations made by pupils, deliberately or innocently, arising from normal and proper association with them in school or elsewhere. Child protection procedures will be applied to allegations where it is suspected that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm and all allegations of sexual abuse. These procedures cover all staff working within a school. All other allegations regarding conduct of adults working within the school will be dealt with through the School's complaints/disciplinary procedure.

If the Headteacher/Designated Teacher is unsure whether or not the allegation amounts to significant harm, he/she will consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer to clarify which procedures will be followed. Where the decision is to follow the complaints/disciplinary procedure, the Local Education Authority Area Personnel Officer will be contacted for advice. The Principal Education Welfare Officer will be informed of the decision.

Where an allegation relates to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer and/or the LEA Area Personnel Officer.

When a child makes an allegation of abuse by a member of staff, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and deal with it according to the procedures set out above and must immediately inform the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:

- avoid delay and act promptly;
- obtain details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated by the person who received the allegation;
- record any information about times, dates, locations and possible witnesses;
- establish whether the allegation warrants referral to social services
- not discuss the allegation with the member of staff at this stage;
- consult with the Principal EWO who will inform the LEA Area Personnel Officer of the outcome.

There will be one of four possible outcomes of the Headteacher's considerations:

1. That the allegation is apparently without foundation. In this case the Head may take no further action other than to inform the member of staff and the parents of this decision.
2. That the allegation was prompted by inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the school's disciplinary procedures. In this case the Head will consult with the LEA Area Personnel Officer.
3. There is still some uncertainty but there is reason to suppose abuse could have occurred and that referral through safeguarding procedures or under internal disciplinary procedures may be necessary. In this situation the Head will consult with Social Services who will make the final decision on referral.
4. An immediate referral through safeguarding procedures.

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

Whistleblowing

We provide an environment in which children and adults feel confident to express concerns regarding the behaviour of a member of staff.

GUIDANCE TO SCHOOL STAFF ON PERSONAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

Try to avoid situations where you are on your own with students of either sex. While we could not function in a school if we were never alone with a student, we do need to exercise our professional judgement as to when this would not be appropriate.

Take into account

- who else knows what you are doing;
- what you know about the student;
- the purpose you had in mind and what alternatives there are;
- how your behaviour might be interpreted;
- the nature of the place and the time of day.

1. Try to avoid providing individual students with a lift in a private car, but if you do, check that your car insurance covers you to do so. You are least vulnerable in doing this if the need is beyond question and others know about your action, for example when taking an injured student to hospital. You are most vulnerable if you choose to offer a lift home when other alternatives are available, for example after a school function in the evening. Always tell someone else what you're doing and why.

Avoid travelling alone with a child, if possible. If a 'chaperone' is not available, phone ahead to let parents know your intentions. Consider putting a child on the back seat.

2. Similar principles apply to individual interviews with students. Avoid taking students into entirely enclosed spaces; use an office with windows, or if in a classroom keep the door open if this is at all possible. If a high level of privacy is thought to be essential, ask yourself:

- Why is this?
- How might it be interpreted?
- Who else could be present?
- Could the interview be delayed so that, for example, a parent can be invited?
- Who else needs to know?

There is rarely a need for total privacy; many confidential interviews can be held with a colleague or student present. Always offer this to the student concerned. If in doubt, postpone the interview.

3. In the event of any injury to a child, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded. Try to obtain a witness report if possible. Inform the Main Office of any such incident immediately as the staff here are First Aiders.

4. Try to keep notes of any allegations a child makes against you or other staff. This should include everything from: 'You're always picking on me', to 'You hit me', or comments such as 'Don't touch me'. Mention to your Subject Leader or Head of Faculty that this is happening.

Get another adult to witness the allegation, if possible. If you are in school take the child to a member of the Head Teacher Team. A record of that meeting should also be kept. Do not under any circumstances be alone with the child. If you are in a residential setting take the child to the senior staff member on duty.

5. If a child touches you or talks to you in a sexually inappropriate way or place, record what happened and ensure that another adult also knows, ideally the Key Stage Director or Year Leader. As it could be a totally innocent touch, do not make the child feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. It is not a good idea for the child to go on doing this as the next person might take advantage.

Do give firm guidelines on sexually inappropriate behaviour to the child. Explain that the behaviour is not acceptable and could get the child into difficulty, but be sure that you do not make the child feel guilty. The behaviour may be an imitation of abuse suffered and is, therefore, not the child's fault.

6. If you take children on residential visits always check the rooms with another adult. Never, under any circumstances, take a child or children into your bedroom.

7. If you must physically restrain a child for any reason, be aware that it could be misinterpreted as assault. It is acceptable to physically restrain a child if a situation warrants this, for example to protect another student or yourself.

Some clear 'don'ts'

Don't visit students at home or arrange to meet them at your home or elsewhere off site. If you think you might have reason for doing this, seek advice.

Don't touch students, whether out of anger, affection or support. Resist the temptation to offer emotional support in a crisis by, for example, holding hands or putting an arm around a shoulder, unless others are present and your motives are unquestionable in the circumstances. Resist, before they take hold, habits like tousling hair, patting on back, or 'playful' taps.

Do not place yourself in a situation where you are spending excessive amounts of time alone with one child away from other people.

Avoid all flirtatious behaviour and sexual innuendo. This is never acceptable even if it is meant to be seen as harmless fun. It oversteps the boundaries between professional and personal conduct and is exceedingly dangerous.

Never do something of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Do not go into a toilet alone with children. Inform another staff member if it is necessary to do so i.e. if you have concerns about the child's welfare.

Never keep suspicions of inappropriate behaviour or abuse by a colleague to yourself. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated by your silence.

Allegations have to be taken seriously and can lead to suspension from duty pending investigation by the police or social services. Guidelines on procedure are published by all professional associations and Trade Unions. Bear this in mind when considering the above advice.

This advice is meant to be helpful but it cannot be comprehensive, so please remember to ask for advice if at all uncertain. Do remember that false accusations relating to personal contact with students are extremely rare – given the number of daily interactions between school staff and students. Generally, students follow the cues we give them. If our behaviour is consistent and

clear, problems are minimised; ambiguity of tone, gesture of speech is the most likely cause of difficulties.

Safe Recruitment Practices

The school follows published guidance on the safe recruitment of new staff and supply staff.

Supply agencies are specifically asked to confirm that appropriate checks have been carried out on individuals who work in the school on a temporary basis.

The Headteacher has undertaken on-line safeguarding children safe recruitment training via the NCSL in line with Bichard recommendations.

Recruitment advertising, applicant's information and the person specification will provide a prominent safeguarding statement and information.

The invitation to interview will include a statement that the interview will include an assessment of the candidate's suitability to work with children.

Interview questions will include an assessment of the candidate's motivation to work with children and young people.

No member of staff will be allowed to begin work in the school until appropriate police and background checks have been completed.

Visiting speakers and other professionals who come into school to work with young people will not be allowed to work alone with them unless confirmation is received that background checks have been suitably completed.

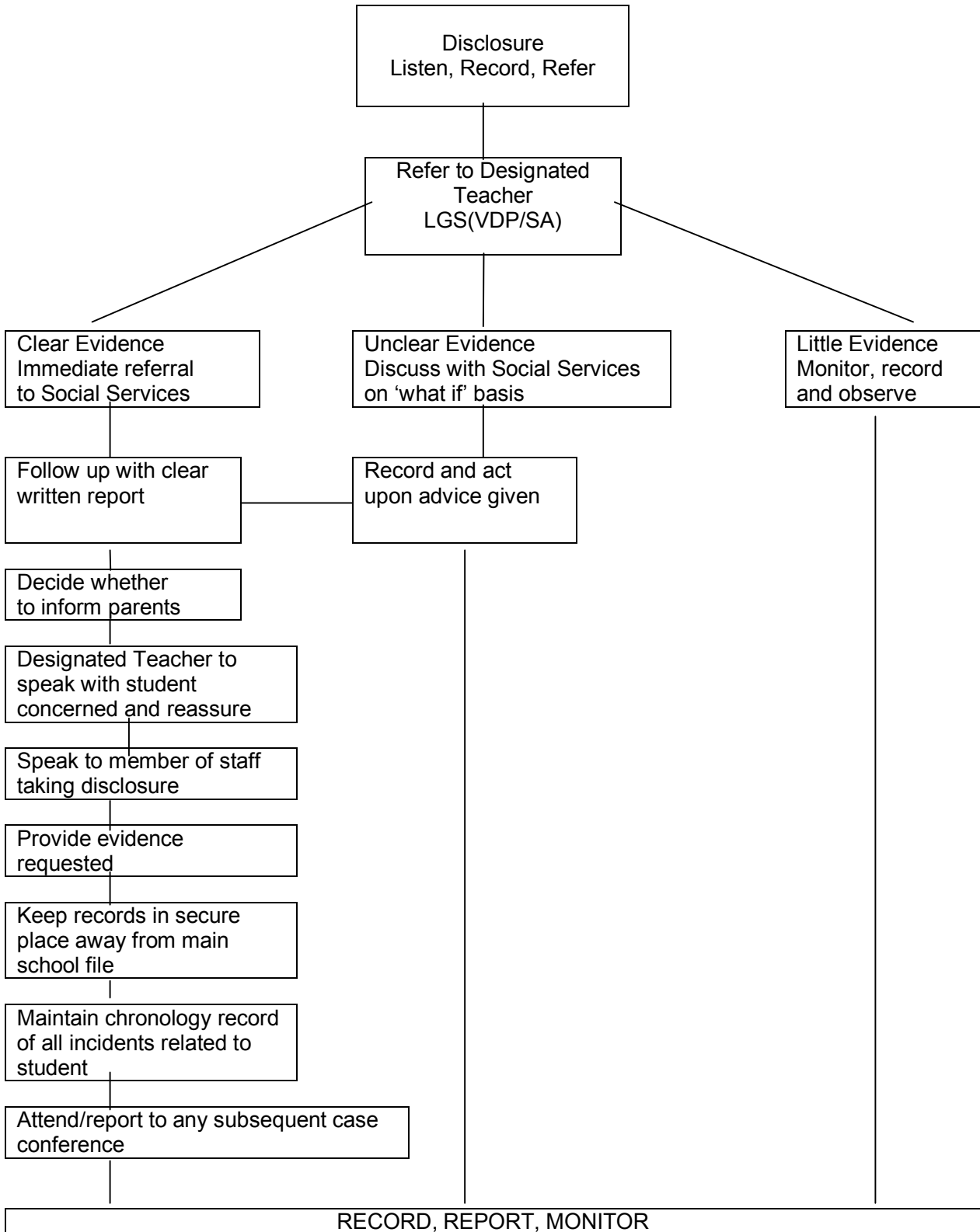
Any child protection training or update in school will include all staff, not only teachers.

Staff are expected to act as role models and are actively encouraged to report any incident of inappropriate behaviour by a colleague.

Staff training days will be used to explore what staff consider acceptable and unacceptable behaviour – this will include bullying, ridicule, the management of difficult behaviour and the school's response to physical abuse. Clear procedures and guidelines will be set out so that appropriate conduct is embedded in the daily practice of staff and staff feel able to raise concerns where they feel this is not the case.

All newly appointed staff are given a pack of relevant policies including the child protection policy to read and must sign to confirm that they have read and understood these policies.

DEALING WITH A CHILD PROTECTION ALLEGATION





CHILD PROTECTION INTERNAL REFERRAL FORM (RF1)

Name of Student: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Tutor Group: _____

Name of member of staff making referral: _____ Date: _____

Nature of Concern: Physical Emotional Sexual Neglect Child in Need
(please circle)

Has the Student made a disclosure? Yes / No

Statement of Concerns/Student Disclosure
(Please note: it is important that you try to reassure the child, but also make it clear from the outset that you have to pass on any concerns so that help can be sought)

Please continue overleaf if you require more space

Have you had concerns about this student before? Yes / No

If yes, have you expressed these to Form Tutor/ House Leader / Key Stage Director or Senior Manager in school? Yes / No If yes, give name:

Thank you for completing this form.
The Designated Teacher will now deal with your referral and inform you of the outcome.