

# Child Protection Policy

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## 1. Principles

One of the aims of Tring School is to ensure students have the opportunity to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, where students feel that they are listened to and taken seriously.

Tring School follows the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board - a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children.

All school staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children.

Tring School is aware of the important role the school has in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and the appropriate referral process.

## 2. Aims

- a) To inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children.
- b) To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.
- c) To establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.
- d) To ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- e) To protect students as far as possible, from the dangers of abuse as recognised within the Child Protection legislation.

## 3. Statutory Framework

In order to protect children from harm the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

The Children Act (1989)

The Children Act (2004)

Education Act (2002), section 175

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – Child Protection Procedures 2007

DfES guidance 'Safeguarding Children in Education and Safer recruitment in Education' (2006)

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006)

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006) requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Area Child Protection Committee. Schools are also 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 are at risk of abuse – these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

The responsibilities of the school are:

Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – Child Protection Procedures 2007

Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.

Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of students, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse.

A Designated Senior Person should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.

Staff with designated responsibility for Child Protection should receive appropriate training. This training is provided by Children Schools and Families on an annual basis.

**Safeguarding Children in Education also states that "parents should be made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child."**

This policy is made available to parents via the school website and in paper form on request.

#### **4. Definitions of Child Abuse**

There are many different types of child abuse and many ways in which the abuse can occur.

The main forms of child abuse are:

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development, often by making them feel they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### **Guidelines for Good Practice**

It is the role of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection to:-

Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance

Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection procedures.

Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff.

Ensure that the Headteacher is kept fully informed of any concerns.

Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.

Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Children, Schools and Families Social Work Team).

Liaise with Social Work Teams over suspected cases of child abuse.

Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential'.

Submit reports to, and ensure the school's attendance at Child Protection Conferences.

Ensure that the school effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns.

Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

## **5. School Procedures**

If any member of staff is concerned about a child, he or she must inform the Designated Senior Person.

The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. Staff/volunteers need to use the Child Protection Pro Forma (Appendix 1) to help them record details and make the process of recording easier

The Designated Senior Person will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children, Schools and Families. If it is decided to make a referral to Children Schools and Families this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concern or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register and a written record will be kept.

If a student who is/or has been on the Child Protection Register changes school, the Designated Senior Person will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school, in a secure manner, to a named person, and separate from the child's academic file.

## **6. Concerns**

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he or she:

- a) Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries.
- b) Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- c) Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).

- d) Gives confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- e) Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- f) Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and /or inappropriate to his or her age.
- g) Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
- h) Any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.

## **7. Dealing With a Disclosure**

**If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff / volunteer must:**

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 Children Schools and Families.

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.

Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.

Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.

Make a written record (see Record Keeping).

Pass information to the Designated Senior Person without delay.

## **8. 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/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Senior Person.

## **9. Confidentiality**

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children Schools and Families and the Police).

If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child sensitively that they **cannot** promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.

Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

## **10. Record Keeping**

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation. Staff/volunteers need to use the Child Protection Pro Forma (Appendix 1) to help them record details and make the process of recording easier, these forms are located in the Staff Room.

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.

Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury.

Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Person promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

## **11. Allegations Involving School Staff**

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff/volunteer, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and immediately inform the Headteacher.

If any member of staff/volunteer has reason to suspect that another member of staff/volunteer may have abused a child at the school, or elsewhere, they must immediately inform the Headteacher. They should also make a record of the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident/alleged incident. [If the concerns are about the Headteacher, the Principal Education Welfare Officer must be contacted (tel: 01992 588580).

The Headteacher will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but he/she will assess whether it is necessary to refer to Children Schools and Families in consultation with the Child Protection School Liaison Officer, or the Social Work Manager.

If the Headteacher decides that the allegation warrants further action through Child Protection Procedures he/she must immediately make a referral to CSF Client Services (tel: 01438 737511).

Under these circumstances the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made should not be informed of said allegation until future action is agreed with the Social Work Team Manager. It may be necessary to discuss appropriate steps to ensure other children are not at risk. The allegation will be investigated in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – Child Protection Procedures.

If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to Children Schools and Families, the Headteacher will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation.

For further information see:

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – Child Protection Procedures 2007: Section 10, page 244.

### **11. Governors Role:**

The Students and Families Committee will review the policy on an annual basis and ensure a Child Protection report is submitted to the full governing body annually.

### **12. Useful Information**

#### **Designated Senior People:**

- **Nigel Barlow** (Assistant Headteacher & **Lead Person**)
- Andrew Dobberson (Assistant Headteacher)
- Kim Baiden (Student Support Manager )
- Nicky Hubble (Student Support Manager)

#### **Child Protection Liaison Officer:**

- Stephen Hughes (Children, Schools and Families)

#### **Link Governors:**

- Huw Bellis

#### **Persons with Safeguarding Qualifications:**

- Julia Wynd (Headteacher)
- Andrew Hencken (Deputy Headteacher)
- Nigel Barlow (Assistant Headteacher)
- Tracy Dodd (Administration Manager)
- Rob Edwards (Professional Mentor)
- Anna Wiltshear (Communications/Personnel Manager)

Tring School Governing Body  
May 2009