

# Ruckleigh School

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

- A copy of this policy is available to parents and parents of prospective pupils on the school website and upon request from the school office
- It should be noted that sensitivity and professional judgement will be exercised in conjunction with this policy

### Principles

1. This school recognises its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children entrusted to its care.
2. The school operates safe recruitment procedures including CRB and other checks required by the Independent School Standards Regulations.
3. The school will ensure that appropriate checks have been carried out by another organisation whose employees have responsibility for the school's pupils away from their own school site.
4. The Designated Member of Staff (DMS) is responsible for the Child Welfare and Protection in school and is assisted by a deputy DMS, both of whom are members of the school Senior Management Team (SMT) and an Early Years Foundation Stage Practitioner.
5. The school includes appropriate volunteers, not associated with the school community, in the procedure for dealing with allegations against Staff and Headmistress.
6. The Staff of this school are committed to listening to, relating effectively and valuing each individual child in its care.
7. This school recognises its statutory responsibility to discuss with the Education and Children's Services Duty Team (0121 788 4300) any significant concerns which may indicate physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect in accordance with the Solihull LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board).
8. This school recognises its duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and in responding to abuse. It is the responsibility of the school to report children thought to be at risk from:
  - abuse in the home
  - abuse by someone known or unknown to them
  - abuse by another pupil
  - abuse by a member of staff

### Warning Signs

Most healthy children collect bruises from time to time. Such accidental bruises are most likely to occur on knees, shins, arms or elbows. Falls on the face may result in bruises on the forehead or nose or a cut lip.

There are however, injuries which are hardly ever caused accidentally.

There are also signs which may indicate neglect, emotional or sexual abuse.

## **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

**Bruising:** The following are indicative of non-accidental injury: -

- Hand slap marks
- Marks from an implement
- Pinch or grab marks
- Grip marks
- Black eyes
- Bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen, thighs, genital or rectal areas could be indications of sexual abuse
- Bruising may be faint or severe. Some skins bruise far more easily than others do. Bruising on black skins may be difficult to detect. There may be a pattern i.e. after the weekend

## **Other Types of Injury**

1. Some injuries can be caused by accidents, which occur when children are not provided with a safe environment. Such accidents can result in burns, scalds, fractures, or even poisoning
2. The following types of injury are unlikely to have been caused accidentally:
  - Burns inside the mouth, inside arms or on genitals
  - Scalds where child appears to have been dipped
  - Cigarette burns or burns with an object
  - Bite marks
  - Cuts
  - Evidence of old repeated fractures
  - Torn skin inside the upper lip
  - Any injuries, bleeding or soreness in the genital or rectal area could be indication of sexual abuse

## **Signs of Neglect**

A neglected child may be:

- Underweight
- Often dirty and/or smelly
- Always hungry

Children may be physically well cared for but emotionally neglected, this can cause all sorts of behavioural and developmental difficulties in school

## **Behavioural Indicators of Abuse**

Children who are physically neglected or abused may exhibit behavioural abnormalities.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting such behaviour, which may be caused by circumstances such as marital problems, separation or divorce of parents, a new baby, or illness or bereavement in the family.

However, behavioural signs may be the only indicators of sexual abuse

### **Such indicators may include:**

- Pseudo-mature or sexually explicit behaviour
- Continual open masturbation or aggressive sex play with peers
- Overly compliant or watchful attitude
- Aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- An air of detachment
- Child only happy when in school
- Child is isolated (friendless) in school
- Child will not trust anyone
- Abdominal pain without any medical explanation
- Eating problems
- Self inflicted injury
- High degree of nervousness
- Depression or withdrawal

Such behavioural symptoms may be exhibited together or separately. They may be slight or severe. Onset may be sudden or gradual.

### **Responding**

1. In accordance with the LSCB Procedures, any member of staff noting concern should:
  - A – reassure the child and at the same time inform that it may be necessary to disclose the information to other people, in order that proper action can be taken
  - B - report their concerns to the DMS
  - C – members of staff should not investigate reports or suspicions of abuse themselves. However, members of staff should watch out for signs of any type of child abuse.
2. Should a member of staff suspect that a child is suffering from abuse, he/she should:
  - Keep notes of dates and times of any concerns regarding the child in question
  - Note any unusual behaviour
  - Immediately report concern and circumstances to the DMS and Head
  - You may only ask: What happened? Where? When? Who? Leading questions may invalidate disclosure, should a case be taken further
3. DMS will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the family and where possible, seek their agreement to making a referral to the DART (Duty Assessment & Referral Team, dealing with calls about suspected abuse; tel. 0121 788 4300; out of hours: 0121 605 6060)
4. This will only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.
5. All referrals will be made within 24 hours to DART ( tel. 0121 788 4300)
6. All referrals need to be confirmed in writing within 48 hours.
7. If the suspicion in any way involves another member of staff, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Head.

8. If the suspicion in any way involves the Head it should be brought directly to the Directors of the School.
9. A report will be made to the ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority) within one month of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
10. Steve Martin (Chief Education Welfare Officer) and Sheila Wyatt (Senior Education Welfare Officer) have made a commitment to respond within 60 minutes to any concern from a school wishing to discuss/clarify a child protection concern.  
They can be contacted on: 0121 788 1505. Fax 0121 779 7714

## Procedures

We wish to encourage an environment where individuals feel secure and can flourish without fear.

Every pupil and member of staff has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected when they are feeling vulnerable.

### Role of Staff

- Staff share responsibility for pupil conduct both in and around the school and on all school activities
- Staff share in the responsibility for all pupils, not just those in 'my class'
- Staff respond immediately and positively to any incidents
- Talk calmly and rationally to children displaying aggressive behaviour

In dealing with abuse by **one or more pupils against another pupil** (and where appropriate) staff will:

- Respond immediately and directly, with the explanation as to why this type of behaviour is not acceptable
- All instances will be referred to the class teacher without delay.
- The DMS will be informed.
- A written record will be kept regarding the incident on a School Concerns Form which will be handed to the Headmistress
- All children should be encouraged to talk to or confide in a member of staff about any instances that make them feel uncomfortable or threatened
- Confidentiality will be respected, however, the child will be informed that it may be necessary to disclose the information to other people, in order that appropriate action can be taken
- Children should know that making staff aware of a problem is not 'sneaking' or 'telling tales' etc. and should be reassured that they are not being disloyal to their peers
- Retaliation will always be discouraged
- It may be necessary to inform parents and put in place appropriate disciplinary proceedings

### **What mid-day supervisors can do:**

- Ensure the playground is a safe and friendly place
- Understand how upsetting threatening or inappropriate conduct can be for children
- Intervene positively when behaviour is unacceptable
- Talk calmly and rationally to children displaying inappropriate behaviour
- Help the children find an interest in the playground – individually or in a group, playing a game or talking
- Help organise games, teaching children new skills and rules where appropriate
- Join in games

### **What Parents can do:**

- Discuss the situation with the child
- Inform the school about any concerns or worries expressed by their child/children at home

## **Record Keeping**

1. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse will make a written record as soon as possible (within an hour if possible) on the school concern form, carefully writing down:
  - The location
  - Exactly what was said
  - Exactly what was seen
  - Putting the scene into context
  - All reports should be clearly dated, signed and where possible witnessed
2. All records of a child protection nature, handwritten or typed will be given to DMS for safekeeping. This includes child protection meeting minutes.
3. Access to any records will be on a 'need to know' basis.
4. If a child who has a Child Protection Plan leaves the school, the DMS will inform the child's new school and discuss with the child's key worker, the transfer of any confidential information the school may hold.

## **The Curriculum**

The principles embedded in this policy link to other policies relating to: Health, PSHE, R.E., Sex Education, Bullying, Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs.

## **Training**

1. This school is committed to supporting and training all staff in matters of Child Protection.
2. Staff are advised that they ensure that their conduct does not give rise to allegations e.g. in electronic communication, one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car.
3. The DMS will attend training in Child Protection and inter-agency working (every 2 years).
4. School will provide training for every member of staff, including part-time staff, on a 3 yearly basis.
5. Volunteers within the school will be made aware of the contents of the Child Protection Policy.
6. The SMT and Directors will undertake an annual review of the school's Child Protection Policies and Procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
7. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in Child Protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

## **Useful contacts**

### School DMS

- J Bennett (Early Years Practitioner)
- E Mitchell (Class Teacher, Senior Management Team)
- B Forster (Headmistress)

### Solihull LSCB

- Children's Protection Unit: 0121 788 4310
- Child Abuse Investigation Unit: 0121 712 6143
- Education Welfare Service: 0121 788 1505
- NSPCC Young Person's Centre: 0121 770 3000