

Child Protection Practice Document

Introduction

Every Child Matters (2006) places a general duty on schools to co-operate with other agencies in the protection of children. It also requires that schools have policies and procedures in place, which should be shared with parents, to address concerns about the safety and protection of children. These requirements echo the guidance for schools which states, "all schools should have in place adequate child protection policies and procedures". The protection of the child is enshrined in law. Thornbury Primary School is committed to all pupils remaining safe and free from harm and it endeavours to play a full and active part in the multi-agency response to child protection concerns. This policy sets out our position in relation to the child protection process.

1. The work in Child Protection at this School operates within the framework as laid down by the Local Authority (LA).
2. **Informing Principles**
 - All children have an **absolute right** to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
 - All children in whatever setting have an **equal right** to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
 - All teaching and non-teaching staff involved with children have a **responsibility** to be mindful of issues related to children's safety and welfare and a **duty** to report and refer any concerns.
 - Parents have a right to be informed about any concerns about a child's welfare or any action taken to safeguard and promote a child's welfare, **providing this does not compromise the child's safety**.
 - Children are **best protected** when professionals work effectively together and share responsibility for protective action.
 - Where there are possible concerns about a child's safety, unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and should not be offered. When a child is in the formal stages of Child Protection Process, (e.g. with Social Care involvement), information about the child and his/her circumstances will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis, for example to keep that child safe, or to monitor.

3. Partnership

Our School believes that the best outcomes for children generally are achieved when professionals can work effectively in partnership with parents/carers. This belief holds equally in relation to child protection concerns. Our School believes in open and honest communication and will usually share with parents/carers any information or concerns that they have about their children at the earliest opportunity. **The only exception to this would be where it was felt that such communication might compromise the child's safety. This would usually be following advice from Children's Social Care or the Gateway Advice Line.**

The School reserves the right to contact CSC Hub, or the Gateway for advice, before meeting with the parent.

The School works comprehensively with other agencies to protect and nurture vulnerable children and their families. The child's needs will always be of the principle importance, even if this is in conflict with the parents' needs. Wherever possible, permission will be sought before referring to other services, but again, the School reserves the right to speak to other professionals if it is felt it is the child's best interests.

4. Prevention

The School actively seeks to prevent children from suffering abuse and neglect through the development of an open culture which encourages them to speak about their concerns. The School addresses the issue of children's safety through aspects of the curriculum and by identifying members of staff who have had specialist training in this field.

In our School this is Mrs Claire Hardisty, and Mrs Fiona Banks. Miss Walsh, (SLT) has also been trained to Level 2, should neither Fiona nor Claire be available. Additional named staff support in particular areas e.g. e-safety (see Safeguarding policy). All staff receive safeguarding and child protection briefing on taking up post, and all receive Child Protection Training on a rolling programme, at least annually.

An ethos of warm concern is created in the School whereby children feel safe and valued.

The curriculum also plays an important part in educating children about their own worth and safety.

Also: See Safeguarding Policy.

5. Responding to Concerns

This falls into three main stages:

- a. The class teacher and/or the Head of Department discusses everyday concerns with parents and informs the Headteacher and, if relevant, the Child Protection Officer (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- b. There is a reporting form on the Staffroom wall, with a summary of guidance
- c. The Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy consults informally with Multi Agencies such as the Gateway or Children's Social Care as appropriate, using the in-school referral form and informs necessary senior staff, or others as necessary.
- d. The Headteacher follows the phone advice from the Gateway or CSC, and may usually talk to parents at this stage. No further action may be necessary.
- e. In a more complex or serious case, or where there are ongoing concerns, the Headteacher makes a formal referral to Children's Social care or the police.

Parents will be kept informed of what has happened at each stage, providing it does not compromise the child's safety. On some occasions, the Safeguarding Lead may contact Children's Social Care (CSC) first to check out planned course of action, and this may be before speaking to the parent, to ensure the correct action is taken. In some serious cases,

CSC may take over the handling of the situation, informing police for example or taking other steps as they deem necessary.

6. Child/Child Abuse

Physical and emotional abuse of children by other children will be dealt with through the School's anti-bullying policy, unless felt to be at a Child Protection level. Parents will be kept informed. Staff are trained in understanding the main forms of abuse. All concerns about possible sexual or physical abuse will be referred to the Gateway.

7. Child Protection Case Conferences and children involved at any formal level with Social Care.

The School will send delegates to case conferences, and provide information about children and families. Key members of staff may be asked to produce a report for this purpose; Headteacher has the proforma for this. The School will be actively involved in supporting and monitoring the progress of children being overseen by Children's Social Care.

8. Confidentiality

Information from parents, children or adults about possible child abuse **cannot** be kept confidential. It is necessary that all staff in the School, including volunteers, are encouraged to share information with the designated senior staff, according to the flow chart (i.e. DSL or Deputy DSL) as this is often the only way a view can be formed about a case. Information and records about children overseen by Children's Social Care will be given **only** to those people who need it and will be kept strictly confidential by them. If a child asks for information to be kept a secret, the adult must explain that they cannot agree to this and they may need to seek advice.

9. Appointments (see Recruitment and Selection Policy)

In line with LA guidance, all relevant checks are made on an individual applying/ shortlisting/ offered a post.

Briefly this includes:

- A full work history, including accounting for any gaps
- References sent for before interview, so enabling any issues to be raised
- References with specific questions and including a specific question regarding safeguarding.
- Enhanced DBS Checks are required for all staff and most volunteers

10. Safe working (see also Government Burgundy Guidebook given to all staff)

Staff are encouraged to adopt safe working practices. Children may be spoken to alone by a member of staff, but this is usually within a public space, or on view to others. If the matter is deemed sensitive or problematic, another member of staff may sit in. However, we also note that if we wish children to feel secure in disclosing or discussion concerns, they may only do so in private to a trusted member of staff. Senior staff in particular, or support

staff engaging in supportive programmes such as bereavement work, may need to speak to children alone, but will maintain appropriate behaviour at all times. Visiting professionals may also need to work alone with children, generally the door will be ajar, or they may be on view.

We do not have a 'no touch' policy, believing this to be in conflict with the harmonious and caring ethos. Physical contact is expected to be appropriate e.g; a light arm on the shoulder, a pat on the back, holding an adult's hand, seating a distressed small child on an adult's knee for a few moments **if the child wishes**, and all the above in an appropriate place e.g. public.

Staff do not on general take lone children in their own cars unescorted unless absolutely unavoidable, and where possible with the parents' consent.

11. Record Keeping

- Child Protection records are held securely and confidentially in the HTs office. The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy SL have access to this cabinet. Each child has a named file, containing a chronology sheet (used to update with key events in pertinent to the case), along with any documentation. When children transfer, a copy of the chronology sheet will be kept and the file handed securely over, (or posted to) the named person at the receiving school with a proforma confirming receipt. (This follows LA officer advice).
- There is a proforma for staff to complete if reporting a CP concern, which is then handed to the SL or DSL.
- There is a standard proforma for completing prior to attendance at any type of CP related meetings such as a Core Group Meeting.
- Staff keep day to day 'welfare' notes in their class note book which is kept safely in each department.
- Each child in School has an everyday 'buff' folder containing reports, attendance notes etc. CP records are not put in these, but there is a note directing to the HT's records.

12. Allegations against Staff

Any concerns are to be reported to the HT, who will seek immediate advice for the LA LADO (Simon White).

If the concerns are regarding the HT, the concern must be reported to the Chair Of Governors, who will similarly seek such advice.

The Whistle Blowing Policy is also available on the intranet.
(see policy for further advice)

The guiding principle for this policy is: If in doubt, seek advice out!

See also:

- Child Protection, Safeguarding and Managing Self Harm (CAT Policy)
- Behaviour Policy (Thornbury Policy)
- Pupil Restraint policy (Thornbury Policy)
- Whistleblowing (CAT Policy)
- Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers (CAT Policy)
- Recruitment and Selection Policy (CAT Policy)