

Arbor Preparatory School



Policy on Child Protection (Safeguarding)

for Arbor Preparatory School including EYFS

(see also Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The health, safety and welfare of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.
- 1.2 Child abuse takes a variety of forms:
 - Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm.
 - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
 - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. This includes non-contact situations, such as showing children pornography.
 - Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see to the emotional well-being of the child.
- 1.3 In our school, we respect our children. The atmosphere within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.
- 1.4 We recognise that abuse and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.
- 1.5 Our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children, and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.
- 1.6 This policy is based on DCSF publication '*Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*' (March 2010). Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 introduced a new duty requiring governing bodies and LAs to have appropriate child-protection procedures in place. This policy takes account of the requests set out in the Children Act 2004 ('Every Child Matters').
- 1.7 Anyone concerned about a child's safety should consult the booklet '*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused*' (DfES 2006).

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our aims are:
 - to provide a safe environment for children to learn in;

- to establish what actions the school can take to ensure that children remain safe, at home as well as at school;
- to raise the awareness of all staff to these issues, and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;
- to ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues;
- to set down the correct procedures for those who encounter any issue of child protection.

3 Staff responsibilities

3.1 “Education staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage” (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006).

3.2 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure all of the following:

- that the management team adopts appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children in the school;
- that these policies are implemented by all staff;
- that sufficient resources and time are allocated for staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
- that all staff and adult helpers in the school are able to voice their concern if they feel that a child is vulnerable, or that there are any particular practices that are unsafe.

3.3 There is a named person designated as the Senior Designated Professional (SDP) for Arbor Preparatory School and EYFS. This is the Deputy Head at Arbor who is Eddie Hepper. The deputy SDP is the Headteacher, who is Wendy Compson. The SDP is guided by two principles:

- In accordance with the Children Act, the welfare of the child is always paramount.
- Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

A key role of the Coordinator is to be fully conversant with the procedures of our Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which is the Suffolk LSCB, and to ensure that the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The SDP must also make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The Coordinator will work closely with Children’s Social Care, as well as the LSCB, when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved will handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, remembering all the time that the interests of the child are of paramount importance.

3.4 All staff have a responsibility to immediately report to the headteacher or SDP any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care.

4 Employment and recruitment

4.1 We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with children in our school are suitable people. This involves scrutinizing applicants, verifying their identity and obtaining references, as well as the mandatory CRB check and ISA registration (from July 2010). We follow the DCSF guidance set out in ‘*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*’ (DfES 2007).

4.2 Assurance is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school’s pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution).

4.3 The school must report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children; the

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) commenced operation on 20 January 2009 and its address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111).

5 Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

5.1 Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

5.2 Physical Abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

5.3 Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

5.4 Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures

- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

5.5 Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

6 Procedure to be followed if an adult has concerns about a child or a child makes a disclosure

6.1 All adults in our school share responsibility for keeping our children safe. We may on occasion report concerns which, on investigation, prove unfounded.

6.2 If teachers suspect that a child in their class may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should **immediately** inform the SDP about their concerns. Abuse can be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature. It can also be the result of neglect. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them; they are required by law to pass this information on. This should be done on the school's Recording Safeguarding Concerns form, written by hand and signed and dated within 24 hours of disclosure by a child or identification of a concern of abuse.

6.3 If a child approaches an adult they should explain that confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence. They should also avoid asking leading questions.

6.4 If a one or more pupils are abusing another pupil, this should be reported to the SDP or deputy SDP immediately. This will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy. If the child is seen to be in danger, Social Services should be contacted.

6.5 If a child alleges abuse, the school will usually make a referral to Suffolk Children's Services without first informing parents and carers within 24 hours of disclosure. However, in some circumstances parents and carers will be informed first.

6.6 If a referral is made, an initial child protection case conference / strategy meeting may be held within eight working days. Case conferences offer the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held.

6.7 If staff need to contact a relevant authority due to concerns about a child they can do so on the following numbers which are also displayed outside the school office:

- Suffolk Children's Services: 0808 800 4005
- Suffolk Children's Services after 6.45pm and at weekends: 01473 299669
- Suffolk Police: 01473 613500
- Bury St Edmunds Police: 01284 774006
- IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL: 999

7 Physical restraint

- 7.1 There may be times when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain children and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention will always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation. We follow the guidance given in the DfES circular 10/98 on The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. The headteacher will require the adult(s) involved in any such incident to report the matter to him or her immediately, and to record it.

8 Guidelines for safety of staff from allegations

- 8.1 Staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.
- 8.2 Physical touch should be kept to a minimum in one-to-one tuition and sports coaching.
- 8.3 The school's insurance does not cover any teacher carrying pupils in their own cars. No member of staff must ever give a single child a lift by car.
- 8.4 No electronic communication should be made by email, SMS or other means with an existing pupil of the school.

9 Allegations against staff / volunteers / Head

- 9.1 If an adult is concerned about the behaviour or conduct of a member of staff the same paperwork and procedures apply. However, if they are concerned that this might be prejudiced in any way, they may contact the Headteacher, Deputy Head, Proprietor or the Nursery Manager (Gail Osborne). In such a case the school will follow the Complaints Policy or Disciplinary Procedure.
- 9.2 Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should be reported to the head. It is also advised that the designated person should be contacted (unless he or she is the object of the allegation), since the designated person will have received higher level safeguarding training. If the head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the proprietor. If the allegation concerns the head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the proprietor without notifying the head first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.
- 9.3 This may result in suspension. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. However, it is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the school will do all it can to balance the interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe.

10 Making a referral

- 10.1 If an allegation is made against a member of the school staff (or a volunteer helper), the SDP or Headteacher will assess the information and if necessary make a formal referral. The school will seek advice on these matters, and comply with national and locally agreed guidance.
- 10.2 When deciding whether to make a referral, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the head and designated child protection officer should not make their own decision over what appear to be borderline cases, but rather the doubts and concerns should be discussed with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This may be done tentatively and without giving names in the first instance. What appears trivial at first can later be revealed to be much more serious, and an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Thus the school should not

do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse (see '*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*', sections 10.2 and 10.3).

10.3 An adult with a concern may contact Ofsted directly on the following number:

- Ofsted Helpline: 0300 123 1231

11 Staff training

11.1 All adults (staff and Head) in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse, and to improve their knowledge of the child protection procedures that have been agreed locally. The maximum period of time before refresher training must take place is three years.

11.2 A member of the management team is trained under the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) on Safer Recruitment in Education.

11.3 The Senior Designated Professional attends an SDP day every two years as well as a Working Together training day (Inter-Agency training). It is preferable but not essential that the Deputy SDP also attends this training.

11.4 Any temporary or voluntary staff will be made of aware of the arrangements for safeguarding before they start working at the school.

12 Confidentiality

12.1 We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. These are kept locked in a filing cabinet in the Proprietor's office. We pass information on to appropriate persons only.

12.2 The files we keep on children are open to those children's parents or carers. Information from third parties will not be disclosed without their prior consent. Access to these files may be withheld in certain prescribed cases where there are instances of actual or alleged abuse (see DfES Circular 16/19). Working notes are not subject to disclosure, but will be summarised and then kept on file. These guidelines of ours are in line with the safeguards on disclosure of information set out in the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.

13 Monitoring and review

13.1 The Company Board will ensure that the school has a senior member of staff designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues, together with the deputy SDP. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

13.2 The proprietor undertakes an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Signed:

Date: 11th February 2011