

Developing a Whole-School Policy on Child Protection

Notes of Guidance

1. The attached framework has been designed to assist schools establish a Whole School Policy for Child Protection in line with DfEE Circular 0027/2004 "Safeguarding Children in Education", "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused", your LEA Child Protection Policy and local Area Child Protection Committees' Procedure Manual.
2. The format has been devised to ensure that, once written, the final policy document will cover all the areas recommended by OFSTED and Circular 0027/2004.
3. Some schools may already have written their policy. In which case, the attached notes may prove useful as a reference document and as a checklist to ensure all the areas have been addressed.
4. For those schools about to embark on writing their policy, the notes will provide a useful guide covering all the areas which need be included in a comprehensive Child Protection Policy document.
5. Some sections include written statements. These are reference statements intended to clarify the purpose of a particular section. If useful, the statements can be copied or adapted. Each section does, however highlight the key issues, which should be discussed with school staff and included in the school's policy.
6. Policies are most effective when all staff are encouraged to discuss and contribute to the final document. All staff are required to work to the school's Child Protection policies, and therefore it is crucial that they are familiar with the issues in producing the document, and fully understand the implications for practice. All staff employed on a short term basis, including voluntary staff must be made aware of the school's policies and procedures in this area prior to commencing work.
7. The attached policy framework includes, therefore, a number of questions to prompt discussion in staff meetings. These should encourage schools to obtain or review information, which should be included in their policy.
8. Should you require any support or assistance, please contact the LEA Child Protection Service, who will be pleased to assist.

Developing a Whole-School Policy on Child Protection

This document concerns the duties the LEA, all schools and FE institutions have to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It updates and replaces your Child Protection Policy issued in 1999, and is in response to Section 175 of the Education Act (2002) which requires local education authorities, governing bodies including those of further education institutions, and proprietors of independent schools to “make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.” *Education Act (2002)* In addition, Section 175 further states that “those bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in considering what arrangements they need to make for that purpose of the section.” *Education Act (2002)* The Education Act (2002) was implemented on 1st June 2004. Section 175 is underpinned by the DfES Guidance “Safeguarding Children in Education” issued on 6th September 2004 for immediate effect.

“Everyone in the Education Service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in education settings; and
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and at school”

Taken from “Safeguarding Children In Education”

This policy draws upon good practice within your Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures (to become the Local Safeguarding Children Board - LSCB) which are commensurate with the Guidance document “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (to be updated in 2005).

All education settings must have in place systems designed to:

- Prevent unsuitable people working with, or coming into contact with, children and young people within the setting;
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor or unsafe practice;
- Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child / young person’s welfare and take appropriate action to keep children / young people safe;
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.

Taken from “Safeguarding Children In Education”

Significant harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development of a child or young person. Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health includes physical and mental health. Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill – treatment which are not physical. This is viewed from the perspective of normal behaviour for a child / young person of similar age and understanding.

1. Purpose Of A Child Protection Policy

- 1.1. An effective whole school child protection policy is one that provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound internal school / service procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. In this first paragraph, state the name of the school / service. This paragraph should reflect the school's / service's statutory and pastoral responsibilities.

(Suggestion) "The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote our pupil's welfare, safety, health and guidance by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The pupil's welfare is of paramount importance."

- 2.2. (Suggestion) 'Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school'.

(Suggestion) 'There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy'.

- (a) Prevention:
(e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils).
- (b) Protection:
(By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns).
- (c) Support:
(To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

- 2.3 This policy applies to.....(state to whom). e.g All teaching, non teaching and volunteer staff etc..

3. School Commitment

- 3.1. (Suggestion) 'We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, abuse.'

Our school will therefore:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. (Discuss how this will be achieved)
- (b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.

(Discuss how this will be achieved)

- (c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE / Citizenship which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- (e) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

4. Framework

- 4.1 (Suggestion) 'Schools do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families, and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion.' (*Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999*)

Child protection is the responsibility of all adults especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the local Area Child Protection Committee (Local Safeguarding Children Boards).

- What is ACPC (LSCB), what are its functions, who attends?
- Who represents the LEA on this Committee?
- What is the purpose and function of the Children and Families Trust and how does this relate to the work of the Area Child Protection register and who can access it?

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. (Suggestion) All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within schools and the LEA who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.
- 5.2 What is the role of the designated senior person and his / her deputy?
- 5.3 What are the responsibilities of the Head Teacher, if s/he is not the designated senior person?
- 5.4. What are the roles and responsibilities of the governing body with regard to Child Protection?
Include here an explanation of why governors should not be given details relating to specific child protection situations.
- 5.5. What are the responsibilities of the LEA Child Protection Service?

6. Procedures

- 6.1 (Suggestion) 'Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, we will follow the procedures set out in the Area Child Protection Committees' Procedures.'
- How will staff be kept informed about child protection procedures?
 - How will your school ensure that other adults in school know what to do if there are child protection concerns?
 - How will you inform parents of the school's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection procedures? It is good practice to incorporate a statement into the School prospectus or information pack. The wording for this statement may be obtained from your CP Service

7. Training and Support

- 7.1. (Suggestion) 'Our school will ensure that the Head Teacher, the senior designated person and the governing body attend training relevant to their role.'

All staff will have access to Child Protection training which is relevant and appropriate to their role. This should include training in procedures to follow, signs to note and appropriate record keeping. It is extremely important that all staff, whether paid or unpaid, have access to appropriate training in order that they are able to react appropriately if an incident should occur. Refresher training should be available every three years for all staff, but bi-annually for designated staff. The demands and difficulties associated with working in this very sensitive area cannot be ignored, and staff must receive training and appropriate support to help them to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people with whom they work.

All staff of each establishment / service will be trained to recognise and respond to situations where a child may be considered to be at risk. Each establishment / service will have a nominated member of staff who is on the senior leadership team and who will be responsible for the implementation of appropriate procedures in that establishment . This staff member will be part of the network co-ordinated by the Education Directorate's Child Protection Service. There will also be a deputy designated person. This staff member does not need to be part of the leadership team. Head teachers / Managers and Governing bodies must ensure that these staff members have appropriate time and resources made available to them to enable them to fulfil their duties in this very sensitive area.

- Who else will receive basic training on Child Protection?
- How will staff be kept informed on current child protection issues?
- What internal support networks are available to staff if there are concerns or queries about child protection?

8. Professional Confidentiality

- 8.1. (Suggestion) 'Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.'
- Define the school's "need to know" policy

- How do you ensure that parents, governors and every adult working in, or associated with, the school understands the need for confidentiality?
 - Why must staff (including volunteers) never guarantee confidentiality to a child?
 - What should they say to a child who asks the adult to keep a secret and how should the child be advised that the information may need to be shared with others?
 - Who else needs to be given this information relating to a child about whom there are concerns?
 - Who should not be given this information?
 - Who should be contacted under ACPC (LSCB) procedures?
- 8.2 Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others, [including to social service departments], must always, however, have regard to both common and statute law.
- 8.3 Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (*Data Protection Act 1998, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8*). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible or in the best interest of the child. The safety and welfare of that child necessitates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

9. Records and Monitoring

- 9.1 (Suggestion) Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.
- What system does your school have for recording concerns about the welfare or behaviour of a child?
 - When it becomes apparent there are child protection concerns, how and where are these recorded?
 - How secure are these (CP) records, are they kept separate from other school records?
 - What gatekeeping procedures are in place to ensure that staff do not have open access to the information contained in child protection files?
 - At what point do individual's own notes need to become part of school record?
 - How does your school monitor children about whom there are concerns?
 - Who is notified that a child is being monitored?
 - How are concerns collated and by whom?
 - At what point will the monitoring records indicate sufficient concern to warrant a referral?
 - How are staff briefed as to the status of these records in respect of parental access?
 - If a child transfers or leaves, (including those children who may go missing) what happens to the child protection file?

10. Attendance at Child Protection Conferences

- What is a Child Protection Conference?
- Who attends and who chairs the conference?
- The Chair of the Conference extends an invitation to the school rather than a named person. Who would attend from your school?
- What training and support are available to staff who attend conferences?
- How are staff trained to produce relevant, concise and professional reports for Child Protection conferences?
- How are staff prepared and supported to maintain a working relationship with parents both before, during and after a referral has been made?

11. Supporting Pupils at Risk

11.1 (Suggestion) 'Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.'

11.2 This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- (a) the curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- (b) the school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- (c) the implementation of school behaviour management policies.
- (d) a consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- (e) regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families.
- (f) a commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interests to do so.
- (g) the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

11.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies in school.

- These include.... (for example)
- Recruitment and Selection
 - Behaviour Management Policy
 - Bullying
 - Restraint
 - Special Education Needs
 - Health and Safety
 - Sex Education
 - Other? (specify)

11.4 We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, mental health issues, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

12. Safe Schools, Safe Staff

- What organisational, personal or professional difficulties can get in the way of protecting children?
- What guidance is given to school staff about physical contact with pupils?
- What advice does the school offer about staff working in a one-to-one situation with a pupil?
- How are school staff advised about avoiding situations where allegations may be made against them?
- What information is made available to school staff about counselling and/or giving advice to children/young people about sexual matters?
- What are the implications of this policy in terms of working with all parents in school?
- What opportunities are there to share perspectives and experiences with practitioners from other agencies?
- What is the position of teachers in respect of civil liberties, disciplinary action and criminal prosecution in response to any professional act undertaken to protect children?
- What steps are taken by the school to recruit and select safe staff?
- How are staff made aware of the current procedures in place when staff are faced with allegations of abuse?
- What steps has the school taken to reduce the possibility of abuse by school staff and other professional workers or any one else working within the school setting?
- How will this policy be reviewed and when?

13. The Multi-Agency Assessment and Referral Form

13.1 This form should be used when we consider that a child has needs which cannot be met solely by the services or resources within the Education Directorate, and where, following an assessment of the situation, we believe co-ordinated intervention is required to promote, safeguard or protect the welfare of the child.

13.2 In these circumstances, we will have records detailing what work has been undertaken by our school to support the child and family and why we believe that a more corporate and co-ordinated approach is needed. This information then provides the basis for the completion of the Multi-Agency Assessment and Referral form. The request for co-ordinated support services for a family should always be discussed with parents unless to do so would place the child or others at risk of harm.

- Who should complete this form?
- Who should have a copy?
- Who should be informed that a referral has been made?

13.3 Where, following an assessment of a situation, it is considered immediate protective action is required, a child protection referral must be made by the Child Protection Designated Person. **This referral will be by telephone to the relevant team of social services, followed up by fax for confirmation.** The multi-agency form should then be forwarded by the designated person to social services.

If it is a child protection referral:

- Who should complete this form?
- Who should have a copy?
- Who should be informed that a referral has been made?

14. Procedures to follow if a member of staff is concerned about the welfare or safety of a child

This should be in the form of a simple flow chart or step by step instruction and should be written for anyone who works in the school who may have contact with children. It should include

- To whom should the concern be reported?
- What should be done if this person is not able to be contacted?
- What should be recorded?
- What should be said to the child?
- What should be said to the parents?
- What to do if no other person shares the concern.

15. Procedures to follow when the Child Protection Designated Person is notified of the concern about the welfare or safety of a child.

This should outline the procedures to be followed by the Child Protection Designated Person when child protection concerns are brought to their attention.

- Who is their deputy?
- How are they both supported?

16. Procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

This should outline the procedures followed by the school if such an allegation is made.

- To whom is it reported?
- What happens next?
- What is the procedure to be followed?

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE IN SCHOOLS

These notes of guidance from OFSTED have been updated with reference to Circular 10/95. From September 1996, all inspections under Section 10 must assure the school's full compliance with the requirements of this circular.

N.B. These are to be re-issued and updated in light of the "Safeguarding " Agenda

In best practice, schools:

- (i) have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- (ii) provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulties;
- (iii) work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- (iv) are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
- (v) monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping, *in a secure place*, clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences and attending case conferences;
- (vi) provide and support child protection training regularly to school staff and in particular to designated teachers to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date, and ensure that targeted funding for this work is used solely for this purpose;
- (vii) contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
- (viii) use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, taking into account of the guidance for Governors on sex education in circular 5/94;
- (ix) provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the schools approach to bullying;
- (x) have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the schools position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
- (xi) take particular care that pupils with SEN in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to

ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills;

- (xii) have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times, using the guidance set down in "Safeguarding Children in Education";
- (xiii) have a written whole school policy, produced, owned and regularly reviewed by schools staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the aforementioned standards.