



Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

Introduction

Colfe's school has a duty under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the 2002 Education Act to provide a Child Protection Policy and a clear procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against any pupil in the school's care. The Child Protection Policy has been written with the guidance set out in "Working Together to Safeguard Children", "What to Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused" and the current DCSF circular- "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education" (2007).

Colfe's school has three Designated Persons and one second Designated Person with responsibility for Child Protection:

- Alison Cobbin-Pastoral Deputy Head, Senior School
- John Gallagher – Headmaster, Preparatory School
- Sarah Redman- Deputy Head Pre-Preparatory School and EYFS

Jane German is the second Designated Person in the Senior School

Andrew Dobbin is the Designated Governor for Child Protection.

All parents of this school will be informed of our safeguarding responsibilities and the existence of this policy.

Aims

The School's policy is designed to create an environment which safeguards children by:

- operating safe recruitment procedures including CRB checks and compliance with Independent Schools Inspectorate Regulations
- raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills to keep them safe
- developing and implementing procedures to identify and report cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- ensuring that our staff and volunteers are equipped and skilled to identify concerns about children and understand how to report their concerns
- supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with an agreed protection plan

Definition of Abuse

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting or by failing to act to prevent harm. The following are definitions of the four categories of abuse. These apply to all children and young people under the age of 18.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness or fabricated or induced illness.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. It may also involve the humiliation of a child, either in private or in front of others. Living in a home where there is domestic violence is considered to be emotionally harmful to children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs and Symptoms of Possible Abuse

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruising, marks, injuries, cigarette burns, bite marks, fractures, scalds.
- Fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression and withdrawal.

Emotional Abuse

- Lack of growth/development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm
- Disturbed behaviour, inability to play/participate, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents

Sexual Abuse

- Genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy
- Apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, bedwetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts.

Neglect

- Constant hunger, unkempt state, weight loss or gain, inappropriate clothing
- Always being tired, late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone

Suspicion of Abuse

- Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a pupil may have suffered abuse **from anyone including being inflicted by another pupil (or pupils)** or in whom a pupil has confided must inform the Designated Person immediately. **A member of staff cannot offer confidentiality to the pupil.**
- The pupil concerned will be asked by the Designated Person to make a detailed statement in the presence of two adults of the events of the problem. The adults must take care **not to ask leading questions** or suggest explanations, and must allow the pupil to explain. The statement made will be written down in detail and agreed by the pupil.
- Where an allegation is made by a pupil **against a relative or another person** not connected with the school, the Designated Person will either refer the matter within **24 hours** to Children's Services Initial Referral and Assessment Team or will discuss with the Local Authority Lead Officer for education who will advise on the best course of action.

Procedures for Allegations Against Staff

Where an allegation is made against a teacher, school employee, volunteer or another pupil, the Head and the Designated Person will make an initial urgent assessment of whether or not they believe there to be sufficient evidence in the allegation to warrant an investigation. In order to reach this decision they may consult the Chair of governors and the Local Authority Lead Officer to advise on an appropriate course of action.

Where the Head after due consultation believes that the allegation is without foundation he will:

- take no further action under disciplinary or Child Protection procedures in relation to the teacher/employee/volunteer/other pupil.
- inform the employee of the allegation and that no further action is to be taken
- inform the parent of the allegation and that no further action is to be taken
- consider appropriate measures with regard to the pupil (counselling and/or disciplinary measures)
- keep a copy of the statement made by the pupil on the pupil's personal file together with a record of the outcome of the investigation.

Where the Head believes that it is necessary to investigate the allegation further, he will interview the person accused in the presence of at least one observer agreed by that person and then:

either consult with the Chair of Governors (or his representative), senior colleagues, or officers from the Social Services Department. If there is any indication of sexual misconduct that may amount to abuse, referral to the Social Services or the Police would be automatic. The investigation would then be conducted by Social Services or the Police;

or where wholly satisfied that the pupil is not at risk of significant harm, that a reportable criminal offence has not been committed, and that the conduct was misguided, ill-judged or unprofessional, the head would undertake further investigations at school prior to considering disciplinary action.

In addition he will inform in writing the measures he is taking:

- to the pupil and the pupil's parents
- to the person against whom the allegations were made
- to the Chair of Governors

The Head is not obliged immediately and automatically to suspend an employee against whom an allegation has been made, but is free to use his professional judgement. He would normally take

steps to ensure that the pupil and the accused were not in contact over the period of the investigation. In addition he would reserve the right to consider suspension with pay at any stage of the investigation.

If the Head exercises his right to suspend, the period of the suspension shall be as short as reasonably possible for consideration of the issue. Suspension is a neutral act and would be without prejudice. The Chair of Governors would be informed. Consideration would be given to support and or counselling during the period of suspension.

If gross misconduct is proved to the satisfaction of the Head, he has the power, after consultation with the Chair of Governors, to dismiss the employee without previous warnings and without notice. He will inform the employee of his or her right of appeal to the Governing body.

If the allegation is made against the Head, the Designated Person will refer the matter directly to the Head of Governors, who will be responsible for investigating the allegation.

Responsibilities

We recognise that all Staff have a responsibility to help all pupils achieve the areas that are 'key to well-being in childhood and later life', as outlined in the document 'Every Child Matters':

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The governing body 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. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in Child Protection procedures are remedied immediately by the Designated Persons. The Designated Persons meet regularly to review and amend the procedures as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the school to gain assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation working with the school's pupils on another site (e.g. outdoor pursuits).

The school will operate safer recruitment procedures that comply with the Independent Schools Inspectorate regulations. At least two members of the SMT will have completed training in Safer Recruitment practices.

The school will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority 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.

It is the responsibility of all adults working in the school (including visiting staff, volunteers and students on work experience) to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Designated Persons with responsibility for child protection. It is recognised that this is a highly sensitive and difficult area of work which few adults will have experienced previously.

The School is responsible to make available to all staff and volunteers, the HM Government document 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'. DFES 2006. This publication can be downloaded from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk . This is available from the designated persons.

The Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and it is available on the school website www.colfes.com and paper copies are available on request from the school.

The Designated Person(s) is responsible to maintain current contact details of relevant Children Services.

Training

The School will:

- provide staff development workshops on child protection.
- invite other professionals to speak to staff on matters of child abuse.
- send staff on courses as available.
- support staff involved in Child Protection by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with a designated person and seek further support.
- provide the Head and all staff with specific training in child protection (updated every three years).
- provide training (updated every two years) in child protection and inter-agency working for the designated persons.
- ensure all part-time staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of child protection procedures.
- create an atmosphere in which children's views can be expressed, listened and responded to.

Guidance in Avoiding Allegations of Abuse

- **Physical contact with pupils** Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff should exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation.
- **Sporting activities** Where exercises or procedures need to be demonstrated extreme caution should be used if physical contact is involved. Wherever possible physical contact should be avoided.
- **Force used to avert an immediate danger** If immediate action needs to be taken to protect a child (e.g. in a fight) and physical intervention is indicated, force should be the minimum required to prevent injury to persons and damage to property. An adult should, if possible, seek the assistance of another member of staff.
- **Corporal Punishment** There must be no use of corporal punishment or any form of physical aggression towards a pupil.
- **Teachers and one-to-one situations** Where teachers perform a pastoral, disciplinary or tutorial task they may be in a one to one situation. It is safest if such meetings take place within school time and in the vicinity of and with the knowledge of other teachers. Where practicable doors should remain open or should have an unobstructed glass panel and there should be the equivalent of a desk or small table between the teacher and the pupil.
- **Extra-curricular activities** It is normally inadvisable for a teacher to give a lift in a car to a pupil alone or to meet outside school except in the presence of another adult and other pupils. Where this is absolutely necessary, the teacher doing so must attempt to seek consent from a senior member of staff, or must inform a senior member of staff as soon as possible afterwards.
- **Email/phone contact:** Where a teacher or member of staff needs to make one-to-one contact with a child via email, IM, text message or phone, this should always be done with consent or knowledge of a senior member of staff, and should only be done using school email/internet and school phones. The purpose for one-to-one contact between staff and a child should be recorded and retained, should queries arise in the future.

- These guidelines do not cover all possible situations and teachers will need to exercise their own professional judgement and discretion. The above situations give some indication of the potential problems area and how to minimise risks.

Confidentiality

All school staff must understand the issues of confidentiality raised by child protection:

- All staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
- Children should be assured that the matter will be treated confidentially as far as possible and only shared with those who need to know. Total confidentiality however cannot be promised.

Record Keeping

- Notes will be recorded on all concerns relating to child protection and these notes will be contained in a separate file kept by the staff member designated for child protection. Information will be recorded with regard to facts, timed and dated observations, describing objectively the child's behaviour/appearance, without comment or interpretation: where possible, and the exact words spoken by the child; the dated name and signature of the recorder.
- The Designated Person will review these records regularly to see if there are any patterns of concern about a child's welfare.

Contact Details:

Senior School	Deputy Head – Pastoral	020 8852 2283
Preparatory School	Headmaster	020 8463 8240
Pre-Preparatory and Nursery School	Deputy Head	020 8297 1709
c/o Senior School	Andrew Dobbin	020 8852 2283
Greenwich Children's Services		020 8921 6921
Greenwich Emergency Duty team out of hours		020 8854 8888
Lewisham Children's services		020 8314 6000
		020 8461 7089
Bromley Children's Services		020 8461 7058
Bromley out of hours emergency contact		020 8464 4848
Childline		0800 1111

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