

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The safety and well-being of all the children who attend lessons in our classrooms is paramount, and our highest priority.

Our core principles are:

- To be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect
- To recognise that all pupils have the right to protection from abuse.
- To ensure that the children know they can approach any adults in the classroom if they are worried.
- To take all allegations of abuse seriously and to respond swiftly and appropriately
- To maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to and valued

Statement of intent

Laidlaw Education will:

- Ensure that there is a designated senior person for child protection who receives appropriate training and support
- Ensure that all team members know the identity of the designated person
- Ensure that team members are alert to the signs of abuse, and understand their responsibilities to refer their concerns to the senior designated person.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the organisation and team members for child protection.
- Keep written records of concern about pupils, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely and in locked locations.
- Develop and follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of the team.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- We will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority within one month of leaving any person whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is updated and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Ensure that the Borough Child Protection Team will be contacted within 24 hours of an allegation of abuse made.
- Ensure that appropriate safety checks are carried out on staff from other agencies who are present in the classrooms.
- Ensure our online safety policy is always followed.
- We do not normally take any photographs. In the event that we would wish to do so, we will always seek written parental consent.

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse or neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives within reach of an unattended toddler. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child (Munchausen's syndrome by proxy or fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males.

Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Neglect

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Peer on peer abuse

All teachers should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Serious violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Female Genital Mutilation

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must personally report this to the police.

Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead.

Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty relates to the managing of safeguarding concerns in connection with radicalisation and extremism.

Laidlaw Education will:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into extremism
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk
- Teachers should refer any concerns to the designated person in the normal way under the safeguarding policy
- The designated person will refer the matter to the relevant local authority contact where appropriate
- Promote the core British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Indicators of abuse and what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they “tell”. Teachers should familiarise themselves with the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TEACHERS TO REPORT CONCERNS. IT IS NOT A TEACHER’S RESPONSIBILITY TO INVESTIGATE OR DECIDE WHETHER A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED.

A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other’s safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently misses lessons

- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy to withdrawn
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their work
- Be constantly tired or pre-occupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age

Individual indicators will rarely in isolation provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw. What is important is that you report your concerns. You do not need “absolute proof” that the child is at risk.

Teachers should fill in a concern form if they are worried about a child and this should be passed on to the designated person.

Taking Action

Any teachers with concerns or evidence should always consult the designated person. The designated person receives training (updated every two years) in child protection and interagency working. The designated person will contact Social care (Initial Response Team). Should teachers ever have concerns about abuse by another teacher they must report them to the designated person and can be assured of confidentiality as far as possible within the law.

The role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

We ensure that DSL:

- Is appropriately trained
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to Laidlaw Education
- Keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by teachers or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely
- Refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children’s social care or police
- Notifies children’s social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than two days without explanation
- Obtains appropriate training
- Develops links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- Ensures that all teachers have read the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Keeps and maintain records of training on child protection and safer recruitment procedures
- Ensures that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually
- Makes this policy available to parents

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside will be taken seriously and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the social care department of the local authority, the child protection unit of the police or the NSPCC, without internal investigation. In each of these cases the matter will be referred by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and that any doubts or concerns over apparently borderline cases will be discussed informally with social care initially on a “no names” basis.

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example call 999
- Report your concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead by the end of the day or if they are not present to the most senior person available that day.
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- Complete the Safeguarding and Child Protection Concern Form.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed

If a child discloses information to you:

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or they may believe, or have been told that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not over react – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – “I’m so sorry this has happened”, “I want to help”, “this isn’t your fault”, “you are doing the right thing”
- Do not be afraid of silences
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child’s mother think

- At an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them you must pass the information on
- Do not offer any physical touch or comfort as it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier
- Tell the child what will happen next. The child may agree to go with you to see the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Report verbally to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form and hand it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Seek support if you feel distressed

Teachers should complete a record of concern form as soon after their conversation as possible.

Allegation against a pupil

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended during the investigation and the usual policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply. We will take advice from the LADO on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, we will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LADO, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

Allegations against a teacher

When an allegation is made against a teacher, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some adults do pose a serious risk to children's welfare and safety and we must act on every allegation made. Teachers who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

If a child or parent makes a complaint of abuse against a teacher, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a teacher suspects that a pupil may have been abused by another teacher or elsewhere they must also immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will make a record of

the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact LADO immediately to advise.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform Ofsted (for Christ Church venue) of any allegation of serious harm to, or abuse of, a child committed by any person looking after children on the relevant premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the relevant premises or elsewhere), or by any person where the allegation relates to harm or abuse occurring on those relevant premises.

Unfounded or malicious allegations

Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the behaviour and discipline policy.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children on the basis that they have treated the teacher unreasonably.

Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or a parent (or other member of the public), the Designated Safeguarding Lead reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Good Practice guidelines

All teachers should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

- Work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations wherever possible/practical and encourage open communication.
- Treat all pupils with equal respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each pupil first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from pupils.
- Be an excellent role model
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

- Teachers speaking to a pupil and being concerned about possible abuse should make it clear that confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil.
- Teachers should avoid asking leading questions when speaking to a pupil where the pupil is reporting on an incident that could be interpreted as abuse.

Practices to be avoided

Teachers should avoid spending excessive time alone with pupils away from others. If a case arises where this is unavoidable, actions wherever possible should be with the full knowledge of others.

Practices never to be sanctioned:

- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Sharing a room with a child on an off-site visit.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing pupils to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a pupil, even in fun.
- Deliberately reducing a pupil to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a pupil to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Inviting or allowing pupils to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- Carrying out actions of a personal nature for a pupil which they could do themselves. If there are such tasks that they cannot do themselves, these should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.)
- Communicating electronically (eg by phone or computer) with pupils unless clearly sanctioned.
- Use of Corporal punishment
- Smoking, drinking alcohol or the use of drugs on the premises

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident.

- If you accidentally hurt a pupil.
- If a pupil seems particularly distressed.
- If a pupil appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a pupil misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.