



Child Protection Policy

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Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of all our children is 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.

It is recognised that staff play a critical role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child abuse co-operate together for the benefit of the child. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every class teacher and adult within school to recognise or report concerns.

Duty to Refer

All professionals have a duty to refer cases where abuse is known to have occurred or is suspected. No professional has the right or responsibility to withhold information or to respect a child's / young person's wish for confidentiality.

At West Thurrock Academy, Mrs J Pitcher is the designated person for child protection and in her absence the Headteacher and in her absence the Deputy Headteacher.

All staff, however, should be aware of the procedures, receive regular training and have total commitment to child protection. Children's awareness about themselves is raised through Personal and Social Education, and Health Education, so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

West Thurrock Academy has a policy of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This may mean that parents are not informed or consulted in some instances. We may not be able to prevent child abuse, but by following child protection procedures, we are trying our best to protect all our children and this is our first and only responsibility.

All staff through their care of children, try to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and are able to say "NO". Suspected cases are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies.

Guidelines

In reporting concern or suspicion, the designated child Protection person/ senior leader, will then follow The Southend, Essex, Thurrock Child Protection Procedures 2015, constantly being updated on the web and the Department of Education's statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2016.

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily starting procedures. The criteria should be that they have '*reasonable suspicion*' and under the Children Act, 1989, this definition has been extended to include '*or may suffer in future*'.

Significant Harm

All children suffer harm, the threshold for statutory intervention is Significant Harm, whereby a child's development is or is likely to be severely impaired. This harm needs to be attributable to the care offered by parents / carers. This can be through acts of commission, for example physical abuse, or by omission, for example by failing to protect a child from the threat of violence.

Children Act 1989

Children at Risk (Section 47)

*The Local Authority **shall make enquiries** where there is **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child or young person living in the area is suffering or is likely to suffer **significant harm**.*

Procedure for reporting Disclosures

If a child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, do:

- ❖ Listen carefully
- ❖ Clarify concerns
- ❖ Make accurate notes using the child's words
- ❖ Report **immediately** to the designated Child Protection Person or the Headteacher/ Deputy Head teacher if she is not available
- ❖ Tell the child that they have done the right thing by telling you and offer reassurance about how the child will be kept safe

Things **not** to do:

- ❖ Do not ask the child leading questions
- ❖ Do not use your own words to describe events
- ❖ Do not promise the child confidentiality
- ❖ Do not investigate
- ❖ Do not interview the parents

It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under The Southend Essex Thurrock Child Protection Procedures 2015 Guidelines.

The reporting teacher will be told of any further action taken i.e. Social Service referral, monitor etc. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency, then any meetings, case conferences or action taken will be followed through and the teacher concerned informed.

Where female genital mutilation is confirmed, the referrer, if a teacher, has a mandatory duty to refer the child and family to the police.

A list of children who have been referred is kept in a locked cabinet in the main office. This includes all children, who, for whatever reason, need to be monitored. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is on this register.

The important message is that if it makes you feel unsure, or worried, do something about it, don't keep it to yourself.

Categories of Child Abuse

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, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent 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 caregivers)
- ❖ Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social, health and educational needs.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

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 (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition, sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex, where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- ❖ Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- ❖ Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- ❖ Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse
- ❖ Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, including online
- ❖ Exploiting and corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.

Honour-based violence is a **crime or incident** which has or may have been committed to **protect or defend the honour** of the family and or community.

Radicalisation and extremism

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

Extremism is a belief in and support for ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable

Headteacher:



Chair of Governors:

