

Wilthorpe Infant School
and Children's Centre
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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Wiltorpe Infant School and Children's Centre

Child Protection Policy

RATIONALE

Wiltorpe Infant School and Children's Centre recognise their legal duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse. We seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of our responsibility for pastoral care. Child protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate, especially in Circle time, Personal, Social and Health Education, SEAL and Citizenship. We hope that parents and children feel free to talk about any concerns and see our setting as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home. Children's worries and fears will be taken seriously if they seek help from a member of staff.

Parents/carers will be made aware at the beginning of their involvement with us that we have a duty to communicate with the Social Services any serious concerns about a child. The child's welfare is always the priority. Changes in a child's behaviour or appearance will be investigated as will any disclosures made by a child to any adult.

School and Centre staff do not carry out investigations themselves, nor decide whether children have been abused. That is a matter for the specialist agencies. However, all staff should be familiar with the procedures for keeping a confidential written record of any incidents. It is important that staff note concerns as accurately and quickly as possible as well as alerting the designated member of staff.

New teachers and supply staff are informed of the main points of this child protection policy through the staff handbook and induction procedures.

RECOGNISING SUSPECTED ABUSE

There are four main types of abuse;

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE**
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**
- **SEXUAL ABUSE**
- **NEGLECT**

All staff have received training to understand what constitutes abuse and what indicators to look for. In addition staff will be vigilant to signs of bullying and also self harm. For detailed guidance see appendix 1.

ORGANISATION

There are two key members of staff;

Designated person in school – Deputy headteacher

Designated person in Children’s Centre – Deputy manager

They are responsible for:

- acting as a source of advice within the school
- ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures
- organising training on child protection within school
- referral of individual cases of suspected abuse
- co-coordinating action within the school and liaising with the Child Protection Team, Social Services and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE AND/OR DISCLOSURE

All staff should refer concerns to a designated member of staff as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- **Listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance**
- **Observe bruises but should not ask a child to remove or adjust clothing to observe them**
- **If a disclosure is made the child should lead the discussion. Do not press for details by asking questions like, “What did they do next?”**
- **Listen – don’t investigate using questions such as, “Is there anything else you’d like to tell me?”**
- **Accept what the child says without challenge – reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them**
- **Don’t lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator**
- **Don’t promise confidentiality – explain they have done the right thing and who you will need to tell and why**
- **Make brief notes at the time and write them up afterwards on an incident form (appendix 2 - copies in the staff room) – give both sets of notes to the designated person**
- **Use the body map to record the position of any bruising or marks**
- **Be objective in your recording - keep to factual information and not assumption or interpretation. Use the child’s own language to quote rather than translating into your own terms.**

The designated member of staff will:

- **Follow-up the referral using the critical incident sheet as a basis for consideration before action**
- **Make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place**
- **Make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further. This decision should be communicated to the individual making the initial referral.**
- **Where a child is referred to social care a referral form should be completed and sent within 24 hours**

Working with parents

Parents' and children's need for privacy should be protected. Attitudes to and contact with parents should be non-judgmental in order to obtain the most conducive working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined earlier in the document. We do have access to support for parents here it is felt that this would be useful. This includes:

Inter-agency liaison

At times school or Children's Centre staff will be called to participate in meetings. At these meetings, representatives from the school or Children's Centre should be ready to provide information about:

- attendance and punctuality
- academic achievement
- the child's behaviour and attitude
- relationships with peer group and social skills generally
- child's appearance and readiness for school
- contact with parents/ carers
- any specific incidents that need reporting

Recorded information from social care meetings and other reports are stored in a secure cabinet in the headteacher's office. Any documents for inclusion in this folder should be given directly to the head teacher / Centre manager or designated members of staff

Allegations against staff

The LA child protection officer should be contacted immediately with any concern, by the designated person. All allegations should be dealt with according to the guidance set out in appendix 1.

The Child Protection Register

Children placed on the register will require additional support and monitoring. The social care department will inform a school receiving a child on the register and accompanying records should follow from the child's previous school. Refer to local authority guidelines on supporting children at risk

This policy has been shared with all staff and Governors. The key procedural points have also been shared with volunteers and students working in school.

Appendix 1 – Barnsley safeguarding Children Board – Child protection manual

Appendix 2 – Incident form

Signed _____ Headteacher

Date ____ 3/12/08 _____

Signed _____ Children's centre manager

Date ____ 3/12/08 _____

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Date _____