

Anchorsholme Academy



Child Protection Policy

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

LEGAL OBLIGATION

All schools have a legal obligation and duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from significant harm and responding to abuse. If abuse is suspected, we are required to report our concerns to the proper agencies. It is NOT the role of a school to carry out investigations into suspected abuse.

PHILOSOPHY

The overriding philosophy of our Child Protection Policy is that the interests and welfare of the child are of paramount importance.

The Blackpool Area Child Protection Committee has established clear guidelines and protocol for dealing with cases of child abuse, and these form the basis of our school policy and procedures.

Official reports of cases of child abuse stress the importance of early identification and the need for effective communication between the relevant caring agencies.

“Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children during school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.”(Working Together-Under the Children Act 1989)

They play a key role in recognising and reporting early indications of abuse. Social Services departments should then take appropriate action, not just in respect of children who have been harmed, but in respect of those where there is fear of harm in the future.

AIMS

- To raise pupil awareness and, through the curriculum, build confidence to ensure their own protection.
- To develop informed relationships with parents in which they understand the responsibility of the school with regard to child protection.
- To be vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse by recognising signs and symptoms and following school procedures.
- To carefully record and monitor all concerns, especially those related to children considered to be at risk.
- To keep confidential records of pupil progress and welfare (in a separate file to other records) and use to inform relevant agencies and authorities as and when appropriate.
- When a pupil leaves the school, the records will be destroyed or transferred under confidentiality.
- To develop a co-ordinated approach to child protection by developing effective links with outside agencies/support agencies and by keeping abreast of local initiatives.
- To keep all staff employed by the school and regular visitors, including willing helpers, fully informed of the policy and any changes to legislation etc which may affect management of pupils.
- To ensure that all staff are themselves protected against allegations of child abuse by keeping them fully aware of the procedures charted in Circular 10/95 and other subsequent documents.

BROAD GUIDELINES

The school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support those children in our care. All staff are responsible for the pastoral care of children in their care and this includes being alert to indications of child abuse. We recognise that for children, high self-esteem, confidence, social awareness, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult all help. We will therefore:

- Maintain an ethos in which all children feel secure and valued as individuals
- Ensure that children know there are adults in school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. In the first instance this would normally be the classteacher, but other members of staff may be approached, most importantly the Designated CP lead, Hilary Newbery.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to keep safe. PSHCE, RE and circle time are used for this purpose. Elements are also included in the Sex and Relationships Education Policy. Included in the programmes are activities which will help the children to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting.

Schools do not work in isolation. Child Protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The school therefore liaises and co-operates with a range of agencies including Social Services, Police, the Child Protection Officer, Pupil Welfare Manager, Karen Manning, and members of the LA Children and Young People's Department.

Staff are regularly informed and updated about issues and procedures and willing helpers, newly appointed staff and other temporary staff are informed of this policy. The Governors are updated through their meetings and reports from the Child Protection Governor (Ian Clare) and fulfil their roles appropriately.

Information about child abuse and the procedures to follow when abuse is suspected are in the Blackpool Area Child Protection Committee's Handbook on Child Protection which can be accessed through the Blackpool Borough Council Internet Site. A hard copy of this is kept in school so that staff have access to it. Parents are informed of the school's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection Procedures in the school brochure, which is updated annually. The school policy is available to parents on request.

When child protection concerns are raised, the school will act in accordance with these guidelines. Ultimate responsibility for Child Protection rests with the Headteacher. The deputy head is available to staff if the DCPO and head are absent.

A member of the school's leadership team, Hilary Newbery (SENCo) is the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO). Her responsibilities include:

1. establishing the school's Child Protection Policy
2. disseminating information
3. liaison with colleagues
4. liaison with outside agencies
5. attending Case Conferences and Case Discussions
6. maintaining Child Protection records
7. organising or running any relevant INSET.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The Designated Child Protection Officer and Governor attend training relevant to their role. Both teaching and non-teaching staff have attended Child Protection Level 1 courses. These are arranged periodically within the school's INSET programme so that newly appointed staff receive initial training and long-standing staff are updated at least every 2 years. Newly appointed staff are informed of the policy and procedures and issues are raised at staff meetings. All staff are made fully aware of the documentation relevant to their own protection and union advice is available.

(The Headteacher, deputy Headteacher and DCPO have completed Level 3 training.)

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an issue which is discussed and fully understood by all who work in our school. The Governors are also fully aware of the importance, particularly when working with or discussing child protection issues. Volunteer helpers are informed of this policy and the need for confidentiality by word of mouth.

It is the school's policy that there can be NO SECRETS between a member of staff and a child.

Confidential records of pupil concerns are kept in a secure location by the designated teacher and are used to inform other professionals if required.

Parents DO NOT have access to Child Protection information.

CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

There are 2 types of conference:

- 1) Initial conference called following allegations and/ or referrals. Its purpose is to determine whether the child should be placed on the Social Services Child Protection Register.
- 2) Review called 3 or 6 months after the initial meeting to consider continuing arrangements for the protection of the child and whether they need to remain on the CP register or be downgraded to CIN.

Usually the DCPO will attend case conferences so that she can make a professional contribution to the decision. She will also attend the regular core meetings, provide feedback and ensure any actions are completed.

SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

We recognise that children who are suffering abuse or witnessing violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, predictable element in their lives. Their behaviours may change. They may be challenging, defiant or withdrawn. We try to support such a pupil through:

- Encouraging self-esteem and motivation (see PSHE, RE and other policies)
- Creating an ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils a sense of being valued (see mission statement, aims etc)
- The implementation of the school's behaviour management, discipline and anti-bullying policy (see policy)
- Regular liaison with other professionals who support the pupil and his/her family
- The development and support of a responsive, knowledgeable staff who can respond appropriately
- Our policy and practice with regard to bullying (see policy)

We recognise that statistically, children with disabilities or emotional and behavioural difficulties are most vulnerable to abuse. Those staff who work with any children in school who have a particular, or multiple difficulties are trained to be sensitive to their needs.

ACCUSATION OF ABUSE BY STAFF

Any allegations made against a member of our school staff must be reported to the Headteacher immediately who will then act according to the recognised procedures. In the case of an accusation being made against the Headteacher, the designated Governor and the Governors' panel will act.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary, eg: when guidelines are updated.