

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR BEECH LODGE SCHOOL

Contacts in School

Designated Person

Lucy Barnes

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Deputy Designated Person

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Key Contacts within the Local Authority

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Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team - 01344 786543

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“Because of their day to day contact with individual children during the school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.”

(Working Together under the Children Act 1989)

1. PURPOSE

1.1 An effective whole-school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Beech Lodge School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the child is paramount" (Children Act 1989).

2.2 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory responsibility on the Proprietorial Body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school (Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfES2006 issued November 2006 came into force 1st January 2007).

2.3 There are four main elements to our child protection policy;

a) Safer Recruitment processes are followed to ensure that those who are unsuitable to work with children are not employed.

b) Prevention through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching, and pastoral support offered to pupils.

c) Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

d) Support to pupils who may have been abused.

2.4 This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to Beech Lodge School

2.5 This school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation and enquiry

3 SCHOOL POLICY

3.1 We recognise that for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse.

Our school will therefore:

a) Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

b) Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.

c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PHSE, which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.

d) Include in the curriculum material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.

e) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.

4. FRAMEWORK

4.1 Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the East Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board www.rbwm-safeguarding-children.org.uk

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those carrying out these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.

5.2 It is the role of the Designated Child Protection Person to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make appropriate, timely referrals to Referral and Assessment, East Berkshire, in accordance with school procedures. If for any reason the Designated Child Protection Person (see cover sheet) is unavailable, a Deputy Designated Child Protection Person has been identified who will act in their absence (see cover sheet). Additionally, it is the role of the Designated Child Protection Person to ensure all staff employed including temporary staff and volunteers within the school are aware of the school's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.

5.3 The Proprietorial Body and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that the school follows safe recruitment processes. As part of the school's recruitment and vetting process, enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), DfES List 99/ Vetting and Barring list ISA scheme, and other statutory lists and local intelligence checks will be sought on all staff that have substantial and unsupervised access to children.

5.4 The role of the Nominated Governor for Child Protection is to ensure that the school has an effective policy, that LSCB Guidelines are complied with and to support the school in this aspect. The Proprietors must not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure confidentiality is not breached.

5.5 The Designated Child Protection Person provides an annual report for the Proprietorial Body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by all staff and Proprietorial members and other relevant issues.

5.6 Lead Officer in Education for Safeguarding is available to offer advice and support. Specific training is available for the school's Designated Child Protection Person.

6 PROCEDURES

6.1 All action is taken in line with the following guidance;

a) Berkshire Child Protection Procedures (2009) Please refer to the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures (<http://proceduresonline.com/berks>).

b) When recruiting to posts which involve working with children and/or vulnerable adults, it is essential that safe recruitment processes are followed, including Criminal Record (CRB) checks. Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES2006, issued November 2006, came into force on 1st January 2007) and can be found on www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

6.2 Staff are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. There may be other adults in the school who rarely work unsupervised, more usually working alongside members of the school staff. However, the Head Teacher will ensure they are aware of the school's policy and the identity of the Designated Child Protection Person.

6.3 Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the Designated Child Protection Person (see cover sheet) or in their absence, the Deputy Designated Child Protection Person (see cover sheet). In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

6.4 The Designated Child Protection Person or their Deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Duty Social Worker Referral and Assessment Team, Town Hall, Maidenhead (see cover sheet)

6.5 Essential information to be provided will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral, the name of person who initially received the disclosure plus any advice given. A telephone referral to the Referral and Assessment Team – in cases where there are immediate safeguarding concerns - should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer. In cases where there have been mounting concerns about a child it is likely that a CAF will already have been completed prior to a child protection referral.

6.6 The school will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to the Referral and Assessment Team with the parents or carers unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the Referral and Assessment Team.

6.7 A statement in the school brochure will inform parents and carers about our school's duties and responsibilities under child protection procedures. Parents can obtain a copy of the school child protection policy on request.

7.1 The Head Teacher and all other staff who work with children will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, that is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals as set out in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfES2006.

7.2 The school will ensure that the Designated Child Protection Person also undertakes training in inter-agency working and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep knowledge and skills up to date Temporary staff and volunteers who work with children in the school will be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.

7.3 The Safeguarding in Education form will be completed and returned to the Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education on an annual basis each year. This will be at the beginning of term 2.

7.4 Support will be available for staff from the Head Teacher where there are concerns about queries about child protection.

7.5 All staff should have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are referred to in the staff handbook.

8 PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with a pupil to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Person and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities. Children can be reassured that only the people who “need to know” will be informed, that this will be the minimum necessary and that information will not become common knowledge.

8.2 Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a “need to know basis” only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

9 RECORDS AND MONITORING

9.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

9.2 Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

9.3 These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a secure place (Head’s office). In the same way notes must be kept of any pupil who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

9.4 If a pupil transfers from the school, these files will be copied for the new establishment and forwarded to the pupil’s new school marked confidential and for the attention of the receiving school’s Designated Child Protection Person

10. ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES & CORE GROUPS

10.1 It is the responsibility of the Designated Child Protection Person to ensure that the school is represented and a report is submitted to any child protection conference called for children on their school roll or previously known to them. Whoever attends should be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has.

10.2 Schools will be part of Core Groups for children subject to Child Protection Plans. Core Groups meet regularly to review and update Child Protection Plans and the Designated Child Protection Person will ensure that the school is represented at these meetings and that a record of the meetings are kept. When a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan, it is the Designated Child Protection Person’s responsibility to ensure that the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, welfare and presentation. The key worker will be informed if there is unexplained absence of two or more days of a pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan. If the school are part of

the core group then the Child Protection Person should ensure that the school is represented at these meetings; that there is a record of attendance and issues discussed. All concerns about the child protection plan and / or the child's welfare should be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting unless the child is at further risk of significant harm. In this case the Child Protection Person must inform the child's key worker **immediately** and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed

11. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

11.1 Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

11.2 This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, whilst at school their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

11.3 This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- a) The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- b) The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- c) The implementation of the school's behaviour management policies.
- d) A consistent approach agreed by all staff which will endeavour to ensure the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued
- e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the pupils and their families.
- f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's best interest to do so.
- g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- h) Recognition that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse so staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.
- i) Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support and / or protection.

11.4 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school. These are the policy for the teaching of PSHE, the policy for the management of pupils' behaviour (including our policy on physical intervention and our policy on bullying) and our health and safety policy.

12. SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF

12.1 It is essential that the high standards of concern and professional responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents are similarly displayed when members of staff are accused of abuse.

12.2 Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Social Care Services, the Police or in some areas, the NSPCC). Whilst it is permissible to ask the child(ren) simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.

12.3 If an allegation is made against a staff member, the Head Teacher should in the first instance contact the Local Authority Designated Person (LADO (schools) The

purpose of an initial discussion is for the LADO, and the head teacher to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The LADO may ask the senior manager to provide or obtain any additional information which may be relevant, such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations, and the individual's current contact with children.

This initial sharing of information and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern, in which case this decision and a justification for it should be recorded, by both the manager and the LADO, and agreement reached as to what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The manager should then consider with the LADO what action should follow in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

The head teacher should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the LADO. He or she should provide them with as much information as possible at the time. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or police or local authority's social care services need to be involved, the head should not do that until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person. Employers must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at the school until the allegation or concern is resolved. If the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded, and there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion should be convened in accordance with paragraph 5.56 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police should take account of the fact that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Where it is clear that an investigation by the police or local authority children's social care services is unnecessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides that is the case, the LADO should discuss the next steps with the head teacher or principal, or proprietor. In those circumstances the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available, and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future. Suspension should not be the default position – an individual should only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative.

In some such cases further enquiries will be needed to enable a decision about how to proceed. If so, the LADO should discuss with the head teacher or proprietor how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. In straightforward cases the investigation should normally be undertaken by a senior member of the school's staff. However, in other circumstances lack of appropriate resource within the school or the nature or complexity of the allegation will require an independent investigator.

If the allegation was about the Headteacher, the Proprietor would follow the above procedure by liaising with the LADO.

If the allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, the pupils involved will be separated and the same procedures identified above would then follow.

SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED

Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations and disciplinary process. Support for the individual is key to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the local authority social care services or the police. The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They should also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer.

12.4 If for any reason it is decided that an Allegations Strategy Meeting is not appropriate, it may be necessary to address matters in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures in liaison with the school's HR Advisor.

13. USE OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

13.1 Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, using the school premises, the Proprietorial Body will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

14. WHISTLEBLOWING

14.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

14.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.. The School's Whistle Blowing Policy is available on the policy file in the school office

15. POLICY REVIEW

a) The Proprietorial Body is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy. Any shortcomings in the policy or procedure will be amended immediately.

b) Ensuring that the list of key contacts on this cover sheet is kept up to date.