



The Schools at Somerhill

Child Protection Policy

Policy reviewed: September 2009
Next review due: September 2010

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A General Policy Statement

The Schools At Somerhill (SAS) has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that the school functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children receiving education at the school.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school:

- Provides a safe environment for children and young people to learn in
- Identifies children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and
- Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe, both at home and at the school.

In pursuit of these aims, the governing body will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people learning within the school
- Aiding the identification of children and young people at risk of significant harm, and providing procedures for reporting concerns
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- The safe recruitment of staff

In developing the policies and procedures, the governing body will consult with, and take account of, guidance issued by the government and other relevant bodies and groups. The procedures have been developed in cooperation with the Children's Safeguards Unit in West Kent and the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection)

The School will refer concerns that a child or young person might be at risk of significant harm to the West Kent Children's Safeguard Unit.

(The governing body has nominated Hugh Tebay as governor with special responsibility for child protection issues for the year 2009/10.)

The Principal and all staff working with children will receive training adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the school procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every 3 years. The Principal will be the senior member of the school management team with special responsibility for child protection issues (the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection- DCPC). He shall be assisted by other members of staff with responsibility of child protection, in particular the Heads of DL and SPP.

The governing body recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to a child's person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

B Designated Staff with Responsibility for Child Protection

Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility

The designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection issues is John Coakley, SAS School Principal.

This person is a senior member of the School management team. He has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people learning within the School.

He has received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the Children's Safeguard Unit and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years. He should keep up to date with developments in child protection issues.

The designated senior member of staff is responsible, together with the Heads of DL and SPP, for:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral)
- Ensuring that parents of children and young people within the School are aware of the School's child protection policy
- Liaising with the LEA, the Safeguard Unit and other appropriate agencies
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in child protection issues and are aware of the school child protection procedures.

The designated senior member of staff will report to the governing body of the School setting out how the school has discharged its duties. He is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy identified by the Safeguard Unit to the governing body at the earliest opportunity.

Designated Staff Members

Other designated members of staff with responsibility for child protection issues are Sam Michau, Head Teacher, Derwent Lodge; Ruth Sorensen, Head Teacher, Somerhill Pre-Prep.

These designated staff members:

- Report to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility
- Will know how to make an appropriate referral
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to children and young people in their school
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years

Designated Governor

The designated member of the governing body with responsibility for child protection issues is Hugh Tebay.

The designated governor is responsible for liaising with the Principal over matters regarding child protection, including:

- Ensuring that the School has procedures and policies which are consistent with the West Kent Safeguarding Unit procedures
- Ensuring that the governing body considers the School policy on child protection each year
- Ensuring that each year the governing body is informed of how the School and its staff have complied with the policy, including but not limited to a report on the training that staff have undertaken.

The designated governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies such as the police, social services etc in connection with any allegations against the Principal. This

will not involve undertaking any form of investigation, but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries.

C Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

The procedure will be determined primarily by the West Kent Children's Safeguard Service which establishes the locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse:

Listen carefully and stay calm.

Do not interview the child, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the child is telling you.

Do not put words into the child's mouth.

Reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing.

Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.

Note the main points carefully.

Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and your questions etc.

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the Designated Person.

Strategies for referring suspected child abuse:

Be aware that abuse is a difficult subject for children to discuss and they may find it hard to talk about what is or has been happening to them for many reasons.

The following factors may contribute to a child's difficulty:

- They cannot find the words to say what is happening because of age, learning, language or hearing difficulties;
- They do not have adult permission to tell and actual, or implied, threats have been used;
- They have found that they cannot trust a parent or an adult whom they know very well;
- They assume they will not be believed;
- They believe silence will help to protect others in their family;
- They have been forced to take the blame for what is happening;
- They do not know what the alternatives are, or have direct access to agencies which can offer protection and help;
- They are not ready to talk about their experience – they do not feel safe enough.

Whenever circumstances allow, staff should report any suspicions which they have to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. There may, however, be situations in which a child chooses to tell a member of staff that he/she has been abused. Where the child feels able to talk about abuse to an adult, it is usually a sign of a strong and trusting relationship. The conversation should be held in a quiet area where there are not likely to be any interruptions. Staff should be aware of the importance of adopting a supportive role and avoid subjecting the child to lengthy or multiple interviews as this could confuse the child and jeopardise the evidence.

If a child chooses to talk to you and discloses that he/she has been abused-

TAKE THE CHILD SERIOUSLY AND TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION:-

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| LISTEN | - | repeat the child's words |
| STOP | - | do not ask more questions |
| REASSURE | - | tell the child he/she is not to blame: 'It is not your fault.' |
| BELIEVE | - | tell the child you believe what he/she told you |
| AFFIRM | - | 'I am glad you told me. It was right to tell me. You have been brave to come and tell me'. |
| CONFIDENTIALITY | | NEVER tell children you will keep secret what they have told you. Tell the child you must talk to other people who can help . |
| FOLLOW-UP | - | make arrangements with the child to speak to them later. They have chosen you as an adult whom they can trust. |
| REPORT | - | immediately report what you have heard to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. Report verbally and write, verbatim, what the child has said to you. Remember to date and sign what you have written. Give a copy to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. |
| EXAMINATION | | Do not attempt a detailed examination or remove a child's clothes to look further at an injury. Under no circumstances should photographs be taken of a child's injury. The child should only be examined by an appropriate doctor. Where the child is in school, it may be possible to observe the child during the normal school routine – physical education, for example. |

The crucial action is to report your suspicions, or what had been said to you, to the Designated Child Protection Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity.

Concerns involving members of staff:

Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff should be referred immediately to the Principal who will contact the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection) to discuss and agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.

Further information regarding the procedure for managing situations involving members of staff, including the DCPC, can be found in the Child Protection Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff. Copies of this document are held by the Principal.

All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult. (For specific guidance on how to respond to allegations against staff, please refer to the Child Protection Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff).

D Code of Practice:

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with relation to child protection. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Physical intervention should only be used when the child is endangering him/herself or others and such events should be recorded and signed by a witness. Staff should be aware of the School's Behaviour Management Policy, and any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedure in which appropriate training should be provided.

All school staff should work towards providing an environment and atmosphere for children and young people to enable them to feel safe to talk. However, staff should never promise a child to keep certain information confidential. It must be explained that staff have certain duties to help keep that child safe, which may involve informing others.

Supervision and support:

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DCPC.

All newly qualified teachers and classroom assistants have a mentor with whom they can discuss concerns including the area of child protection.

The DCPC can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish.

Training opportunities:

The DCPC is responsible for ensuring staff, including himself, receive training in the area of child protection. Whole staff training in the area of child protection including an overview of the Framework for Assessment took place in 2007, takes place in October 2009 and will then be planned for 2012.

Monitoring and review:

All school personnel and governors will have a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss its contents prior to the approval of the Governing Body being formally sought.

The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually.

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its content.

E Recruitment and Selection Procedures

The School follows the government guidelines for Safer Recruitment and the SMT and two governors attended a Safer Recruitment INSET on 28/09/09. Recruitment and selection procedures are regularly reviewed in order to follow best practice.

DCPC Mr J Coakley; Mrs S Michau (DL); Mrs R Sorensen (SPP)
CP Governor Mr Hugh Tebay
LEA (Area Children's Officer) Mrs Helen Windiate 01732 525035
helen.windiate@kent.gov.uk
Upcoming CP Training event 13.10.09
CP Training Next Planned: Michaelmas 2012

JC September 2009