

Hanwell Fields Community School Child Protection Policy

Agreed by staff: June 2003 Ratified by Governors: June 2003
Reviewed July 16th 2008 November 2009 Review date: 2010

1. Context

- The protection of children is the proper concern of everyone in a position to help. Primary responsibility for the care and protection of children rests with their parents, but a range of services is available to help them with this task. Parents seeking help for themselves make many referrals to agencies. Relatives, friends and neighbours may also directly, or encourage families to seek help or alert statutory authorities to children about whom they are concerned. All agencies with staff who are in direct contact with children and families must be involved.
- The safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to all those involved in Education.
- Children can develop a special and close relationship with school staff, and view them as significant and trustworthy adults.
- It is not surprising therefore that children, if they have been abused, may confide or disclose to a teacher or other member of staff.
- School staff are also in a unique position to notice any change in demeanour or circumstances. There is the opportunity to notice injuries, marks or bruises when children are doing P.E., games or swimming which might indicate a child has been abused. (Child Protection Procedures, Area Child Protection Committee of Oxfordshire 2002)

At Hanwell Fields Community School we agree that the safety and protection of all pupils is of paramount importance and that all staff will adhere to this policy and the child protection procedures established by the area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) We will work appropriately with each child, their family and other agencies to protect in all cases, the child.

The school has adopted the LA Code of Conduct for school staff accused of child abuse. All staff will adhere to this code of conduct in line with national guidelines and supported by the OSCB.

The Designated Teacher

- The designated teacher for child protection is the Headteacher
- Should the headteacher be the subject of an allegation then it is to be reported directly to the chair of Governors.
- The Deputy head or Bridges supervisor is the person to contact in the absence of the Headteacher.
- Those named above have received child protection training and will liaise in accordance with OSCB Child Protection Procedures and LA Personnel Procedures.
- A copy of the OSCB Child Protection Procedures is on the OSCB website.
- All staff, including supply teachers and other visiting staff (e.g. school nurses) and those supporting school trips, are informed of the designated teachers' name(s) and the school's policy for the protection of children. This is done during their first induction to the school.

- All staff need to be alert to the signs of harm and abuse. They should report any concerns if not immediately, as soon as possible, that day to the designated teacher or named deputy. If in any doubt they should consult with the designated teacher.

- LEA Personnel Procedures are located on OCC website.

- Allegations against staff of other professionals are reported to the HT or Chair of Governors in the first instance and are always reported to the LA Safeguarding Office (Barry Armstrong).

1. Response in school

i. Reporting to the designated teacher

Any concern must be discussed with the designated teacher or their named deputy in their absence, as soon as possible and at least by the end of the teaching session.

ii. Immediate response to the child

It is vital that our actions do not abuse the child further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

- Listen to the pupil, if you are shocked by what is being said try not to show it
- It is OK to observe bruises but not to ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them

- If a disclosure is made the pace should be dictated by the pupil without them being pressed for detail by being asked such questions as "what did they do next?" or "where did they touch you?". It is our role to listen not to investigate. Use open questions such as "is there anything else you want to tell me?" or "yes?" or "and?"
- Accept what the pupil says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"
- Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this
- Don't criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love
- **Don't promise confidentiality**, reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated teacher) and why. It is important that you don't make promises that you cannot keep such as "I'll stay with you all the time" or "it will be alright now".

3. Recording Information

- Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, recording facts and not assumption and interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated.
- Observed injuries and bruises are to be recorded on a Body Map. (basic outline of a child's body shape)
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into "proper terms").
- It is important to keep these original notes and pass them to the designated teacher.
- All referrals to Social Services must be followed up within 24 hrs in writing.

4. Support

i. Pupils and families

Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk.

This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation

- 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
- The implementation of school behaviour management policies
- A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of the behaviour from that which the pupil displays.
- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support pupils and their families
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the pupil's interests to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations

ii. Staff

Receiving a disclosure or observing signs of abuse can be very distressing. You should discuss your feelings with the designated teacher or other senior member of staff.

Incidents of a child protection nature can affect staff not directly involved. Meetings should be used to support staff in this situation. The LA Lead Officer for Child Protection can facilitate such meetings if requested

You may be asked to attend a Strategy Meeting. You will need to take the completed referral pro-forma, school attendance records and any other information the school may hold.

You may be required to attend a child protection case conference for which you should provide a report.

Your designated teacher will be available to support and advise you.

5. Confidentiality

Staff have the professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals particularly investigating agencies. If a pupil confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he/she have a responsibility to refer for the child's own sake. Within that context, the child should, however be reassured that the matter will be disclosed only to the people who need to know about it. Staff who receive the

information about children and families in the course of their work should have the information only within professional context. Child protection records should be kept securely locked.

Personal information about all pupils' and their families is regarded by those who work in this school as confidential. All staff will aim to maintain this confidentiality, all records relating to child protection incidents will be maintained by the designated teacher and only shared as is consistent with the protection of children.

6. Parents

- Parents play an important role in protecting their children from abuse. The school is required to consider the safety of the pupil and should a concern arise professional advice will be sought prior to contacting parents.
- The school will work with parents to support the needs of their child
- The school aims to help parents understand that the school, like all others, has a responsibility for the welfare of all pupils and has a duty to refer cases to the Social Services in the interests of the child.

7. When a pupil transfers to another school

- If the pupil is on the child protection register, their Social Worker will be contacted by the designated teacher and informed of the transfer.
- When the child changes schools within the authority, child protection records will be passed on to the designated teacher at the receiving school.
- When the child is moving to another authority information will be passed onto the next school's designated teacher. Case conference minutes are not transferred but the date, name of chair, local authority and outcome will be included on the records transferred.

8. Training

- This school has a commitment to training, updates and attendance at inter-agency child protection meetings. Time will be given to enable this commitment to be met.
- The Designated teacher will be expected to cascade learning to the wider staff group via meetings etc.

9. Case conferences and core group meetings

- It is generally a requirement for the teacher or headteacher to attend a Child Protection case Conference. You should prepare a report presenting this to the chair at the start of the meeting. The chair will gather all information and assess the risks you will be asked for your view in respect of registration.
- If a child's name is placed on the Oxfordshire Child Protection register a Core Group will be agreed. All core group members meet regularly (at least monthly) monitor and progress the Child Protection Plan and Core Assessment. Attendance at these meetings will be given priority.
- The designated teacher will be available to advise and support you.
- Where no registration has taken place schools maybe asked to monitor. It is your responsibility to ask for clarity about information required, timescales, and reporting methods.

10. Curriculum

This school has a commitment to safeguarding children and equipping them, for example with the skills to understand their rights, appropriate forms of punishment and chastisement and the difference between good and bad touching. Sessions such as PSHE and Circle time can and will be used to assist our young pupils in developing such skills.