

Kirkby Malzeard C.E. Primary School

Policy Title: Child Protection Policy

Contact Person: Mrs A.M. Peacock Head Teacher

Rationale:

These guidelines are based on the sample policy produced by the North Yorkshire Education Social Work service and are in line with the North Yorkshire Area Child Protection Committee procedures set out in the "Red Book".

Aims and Objectives:

Kirkby Malzeard C.E. Primary School places the protection of pupils in its care as one of its major priorities and responsibilities. The school recognises and accepts that teachers, along with other adults working within school, are uniquely placed to observe children and note any signs of emotional, behavioural or physical signs, which may be suggestive of child abuse. It recognises also that the relationship between teachers and pupils, which fosters respect, confidence and trust, can lead to the disclosure of abuse.

Whilst recognising the necessity and nature of good relationships with parents of pupils in its care and attempting to preserve these wherever possible, the school acknowledges that the pupils' protection is paramount.

In order to prepare staff for their responsibility in relation to the protection of pupils, the school has received basic child protection awareness training, notes referring to signs and symptoms of abuse and definitions of abuse are contained at the end of this document. In addition the Head teacher as the designated Co-ordinator for Child Protection Issues has received more thorough training to enable her to support and advise staff and to take appropriate action.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The designated Child Protection Officer is Mrs Peacock, the head teacher. The designated Child Protection Governor is Mrs Pickles.

Procedures for members of the school staff.

Any member of staff who:

- a. has suspicion that a pupil is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributed to normal knocks or scrapes which a pupil receives in normal play, or is inconsistent with the explanation, or the explanation is not consistent over time;
- b. notes behaviour - including changes in behaviour - , moods, differences in patterns of attendance, actions or over familiarities which give rise to suspicions that a pupil may have suffered abuse;

- c. notes indications that a pupil is suffering from any lack of care or treatment, or that a child is suffering as a result of emotional maltreatment;
- d. receives hints or a disclosure from a pupil or other person

MUST REPORT THIS TO THE HEAD TEACHER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE EVEN IF THE SUSPICIONS ARE ONLY SLIGHT. She will then take responsibility for managing the situation in accordance with County Child Protection Procedures

Remember

1. It is not the responsibility of teachers or support staff to investigate abuse. We do however have a duty to act on suspicion and refer to the investigating agencies.
2. Care must be taken in asking and interpreting answers to questions. Always listen to and take seriously what the pupil tells you without showing disbelief, shock, horror or surprise.
3. Do not ask leading or closed questions – this could make it impossible to pursue the case properly later. Let the pupil use his/her own words.
4. Do ask open questions – who, what, why, where, when, how.
5. Do not prolong a discussion with a pupil artificially in the hope of getting a disclosure. Do not ‘interrogate’.
6. If urgent medical treatment is needed the Head teacher will seek advice from the GP or take the pupil to the surgery or hospital.
7. Protection of the pupil is paramount and as such it is essential that the school makes no approach to the parents or to the person alleged to have committed the abuse. This is the responsibility of the investigating agencies and based on the need to protect the pupil.

Dealing with Disclosure

1. All staff should ensure that all interviews with pupils are held in a room where they are visible from outside. If possible, have another adult in attendance. If a pupil is suddenly making a disclosure to you this will probably not be possible. In this case common sense and professional judgement must prevail.
2. If a pupil confides in you and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important to tell the pupil sensitively that you have a duty to refer the information to the Head teacher for the pupil’s own sake.
3. Do not criticise the perpetrator – the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.

4. Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable – do not make promises that cannot be kept such as “I’ll stay with you” or “Everything will be all right now”.
5. Try to alleviate guilt if the pupil refers to it - “You’re not to blame”, “You’re not alone in this, you’re not the only one this sort of thing has happened to”. etc.
6. Do not ask the pupil to repeat all they have said to another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to speak. Try to see the matter through yourself if possible and keep in contact with the pupil throughout the process.
7. If a Social Service interview is to follow, the pupil, if they wish, can have a supporter present (Head teacher).

Recording

1. The Designated Co-ordinator will record ALL concerns passed on to her in the Protection Issues log regardless of whether or not further action is taken.
2. If a pupil makes a disclosure make some very brief notes at the time. It is important to record the pupil’s own words.
3. Write these notes up as soon as possible afterwards. Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the pupil. If the pupil uses sexual ‘pet’ words, record the actual words used rather than ‘translating’ them into ‘proper’ words. Clearly distinguish between fact, opinion, third party information and ‘hearsay’. Be careful to record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions.
4. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries.
5. Pass this information on as soon as possible.
6. Make notes of any further discussions, observations, and telephone conversations you have concerning the issue following the initial report.
7. Such records will be kept in a confidential file along with information from other agencies involved, case conference minutes etc. This information will be kept under lock and key and is exempt from Open Access (DFEE Circular 10.89). Records will be transferred to any future school to which the pupil transfers.
8. The confidential information in this file will be disseminated on a ‘need to know’ basis.

9. If information regarding child protection issues is produced on a word processor it should be either under impenetrable password control or immediately transferred to floppy disk and deleted from the machine. In this case the disc should be kept under lock and key in the same way as any written information.

Case Conferences

The school's unique knowledge of its pupils means that attendance at these is very important and a representative of the school should make every effort to attend. In most cases this would be the Head teacher. It is important that the representative should be someone who knows the pupil well as this is in the best interests of the pupil. Centrally funded supply cover is available to enable staff to attend case conferences.

On the rare occasions when it is not possible for a member of staff to attend a conference, a written report must be sent. A copy of this report needs to be kept with other information in the child protection file.

Dealing with Parents / Guardians

The school's relationship with families is very important. In the interests of the pupil every effort must be made to retain a working relationship with the family, even – or especially – where the family may have been involved in the abuse of the pupil.

When parents learn that a referral has been made it is important that they are helped to understand that school has acted:

Following consultation,

In what they consider to be the best interest of the child,

In keeping with the North Yorkshire procedures and guidelines.

A summary of these guidelines will be developed for parents.

Supporting the Pupil

The school must continue to support the pupil and staff should not assume that because other agencies become involved they no longer have a part to play.

Pupils are entitled to a proper explanation (age appropriate) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why. It is essential that the pupil realises that a secure and caring relationship exists between him/her and the staff involved.

The Head teacher will decide which members of staff 'need to know' what has occurred and how much information needs to be made available. Staff will be informed when pupils enter school that are already on the At Risk Register.

The governing body reviews this policy regularly in line with changes in government regulations and recommendations.

Who will be responsible for monitoring? Head Teacher & Governing Body.

Adopted by Governing Body (Date)

Review Date

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Signs of Neglect

- looks extra-thin and poorly
- well below average in height and weight, 'failing to thrive'
- complains of hunger, lacking energy
- has untreated nappy rash or other condition/injury untreated
- has repeated accidents, especially burns
- left alone at home inappropriately
- repeatedly unwashed, smelly
- kept away from school medicals
- reluctant to go home, especially at weekends

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-depreciation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour [e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking]
- Self mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Tearful/Cries at the slightest thing/Withdrawn

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Tendency to cry easily
- Regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Complaints of genital itching or pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, a baby-sitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Apparent secrecy
- Wetting, day or night
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares

- Chronic illnesses, especially throat infections and venereal diseases
- Anorexia or bulimia
- Self-mutilation, attempted suicide, frequently running away
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Phobias or panic attacks

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Injuries that are not adequately explained by the pupil
- current bruising/injury, with a long history of bruises and accidents
- injuries getting progressively worse, or occurring in a time pattern [e.g. every Monday morning or after visits to.....]
- 'grip' marks on arms [may indicate severe shaking] or 'slap' markings [especially cheeks, buttocks, arms or legs]
- long marks which could be from a belt or cane
- stub marks that might be from a cigarette
- bruising on both sides of the ear. Any 'symmetrical' bruising is suspicious
- teeth marks from a bite
- scalding to both soles of the feet, may suggest 'dipping'
- bruised eyes, especially if both at once. [A doctor can usually tell whether the bruised eye is spread-bruising from an accidental bump to the nose, or more likely to have been a fist to the eye]
- constant attention seeking; over-pleasing/compliant behaviour; 'frozen watchfulness'
- running away
- kept away from school medicals
- reluctant to go home, especially at weekends

Definitions of Abuse

Neglect

"persistent or severe neglect ... or failure to protect a child from exposure to any danger, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive"

Physical Abuse

"actual or likely physical injury ... or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering"

Sexual Abuse

"actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature"

Emotional Abuse

“actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse”

Note that these categories may overlap.