

# Child Protection and Procedures Policy

## 1. Introduction

- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Sexual Offences Act 2003, Sections 175 and 176 of the Education Act 2002 and related guidance including The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007, Child in Need/Child Protection Procedure 2001 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006. Legislation from the Data Protection Act 1998 has informed the development of this policy. Access to these documents is via teachernet or [http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/safeguards\\_policy.cfm](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Children/safeguards_policy.cfm)
- Child Protection involves four agencies: Social Services, Police, Health and Education.
- The Education Act 2002, sections 175 and 176 introduced a statutory duty on schools, LEAs and Further Education Institutions to ensure that they meet their responsibilities in promoting the rights, welfare and safety of children. There must be regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- The Governing Body, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff at The Marsh Academy take seriously our collective responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of all the children and young people entrusted to our care.
- All children and young people have a right to be safe from maltreatment, neglect, sexual exploitation, accidental injury/death, bullying, discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour. All children have a right to security and stability. All children should be cared for.
- Each of the four agencies has a role to play in ensuring that children are safe.

## 2. Safeguarding, Promoting Welfare and Child Protection

Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare is protection from maltreatment, the prevention of impairment of health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and enabling children to have optimum life chances, entering adulthood successfully.

Child Protection is a part of Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare. It refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. All agencies should aim to proactively safeguard and promote welfare so that the need to take action to protect children from harm is reduced.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities: DCPC

- The current Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC) is Senior Pastoral Leader, Michelle Whitewood. The Academy's Child Protection Team is led by the DCPC. The Senior Leadership Team member with responsibility in this area is Assistant Principal, Robert Bristow.
- It remains the responsibility for the DCPC to oversee procedures, to ensure that record keeping for Child Protection and Child in Need incidents, disclosures and reports are kept scrupulously up to date and secure, to ensure that Child Protection records have been received from the feeder primary schools, and to ensure that all staff in the Academy, including teaching and support staff are aware of and

understand the Child Protection policy and are trained in Child Protection awareness and process.

- The DCPC should ensure that his/her own training is refreshed every 2 years. It is the responsibility of the DCPC to ensure that the Academy's staff are trained in Child Protection awareness and processes in Child in Need issues and disclosures at least every 3 years. This includes that all new visiting members of staff and volunteers receive appropriate induction.
- It is the responsibility of the DCPC to report to the Governing Body once per year a summary of the Child Protection activity that has been undertaken that Academy year as well the details of training that has been undertaken with staff.
- Working through the Academy's Child Protection team, the DCPC co-ordinates all Child Protection action within the Academy, ensuring that locally established procedures are followed with regards to reporting and referral processes. Any member of the Academy's Child Protection Team may liaise with external agencies but this is co-ordinated by the DCPC. Similarly, the DCPC should ensure that the Academy is represented at inter-agency meetings, in particular at Strategy meetings and Child Protection Conferences. Normally a member of the SLT Child Protection Team will attend Conferences and Strategy Meetings.
- All referrals should be made via the DCPC.
- The DCPC will act as principal consultant for staff to discuss concerns.
- The DCPC may delegate the day-to-day process of record keeping to a member of the Child Protection team but records must remain strictly confidential and information only shared appropriately on a need-to-know basis.
- Working through the Child Protection team, the DCPC should ensure that the Academy's part in child care/protection plans is both managed and monitored effectively.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities: The Academy**

- All adults in the Academy have a role to play in protecting children and young people from abuse, in promoting the welfare of children and young people and in preventing children from being harmed.
- It is essential that the role of the Academy in terms of Child Protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to RECOGNISE and REFER.
- The Academy will notify the local Social Services team if it should have to exclude a student on the Child Protection register either for a fixed term or permanently; if there is an unexplained absence of such a student of more than two days.
- The Academy is responsible for ensuring that all action taken is in line with Kent's child in need/child protection procedure. This process follows the requirements of central government guidance, specifically under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.
- The role of the Academy within the county procedure is to contribute to the identification, referral and assessment of children in need including children who may have suffered, be suffering or who are at risk of suffering significant harm. The Academy may also have a role in the provision of services to children in need and their families.

#### **5. Recruitment of Staff**

- The Academy has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for children to learn in. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching and those who work at the Academy on

a temporary basis such as supply staff, voluntary staff or those on a training placement, are subject to an enhanced CRB check and follow up references.

- Any advertisements for staff placed by the Academy must be published to include the following statement: "The safeguarding of children and young people is a prime responsibility of the Academy. This appointment is subject to an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau."
- The academy's Child Protection policy is provided to applicants for any job vacancies.
- Where the academy recruits the services of third-party agency staff, we insist on an enhanced CRB certificate being shown and provide outline guidance to these persons.
- Where the academy retains the services of contractors, all must hold, and produce for checking, a current and enhanced CRB certificate.
- Volunteers, generously giving their time to the academy, are never left unsupervised with students. If their activities bring them into contact with students with a greater frequency than once per month or involve any single overnight activity, they need to have shown an enhanced CRB certificate.

## **6. Procedures**

All staff should know how to access copies of the Kent Child in Need/Child Protection procedure, the KCC Child Protection: Guidelines for School Staff and Child Abuse: What every parent needs to know and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfES). Copies are also kept in the staff room. Child Protection refresher training should be undertaken every Academy year with the whole staff, as appropriate within the annual CPD programme cycle and forms an integral part of the NQT induction programme. Training is led by the DCPC or other appropriate, recognised agency.

## **7. Curriculum**

It is important that all staff, including those who deliver PSHEE, are aware of their responsibility to make children and young people aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can help keep themselves safe. The Marsh Academy provides opportunities for children and young people to learn about keeping safe; and whom to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle students are taught, for example:

- to recognise and manage risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly;
- to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable;
- to recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being and develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including knowing when and where to get help;
- to use assertiveness techniques to resist unhelpful pressure.

Issues such as domestic violence and abuse can be difficult to broach directly in the classroom. However, discussions about personal safety and keeping safe are dealt with and reinforce the message that any kind of violence is unacceptable; let children and young people know that it is okay to talk about their own problems; and signpost sources of help. Raising these issues can lead children to bring up personal problems and concerns, and staff delivering lessons on these subjects are prepared for that possibility.

## **7. Recognition of Abuse**

All staff in the Academy should be aware of the definitions of abuse and the signs and symptoms of abuse. The four categories of abuse i.e. Physical, Sexual, Emotional abuse and Neglect are made explicit through staff training and are clearly explained in the documentation available to staff.

## **8. Responding to Concerns**

- Children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self blame.
- Concerns for a child or young person may come to the attention of staff in a number of ways. Some concerns are overt but others may seem more covert. Observation of behaviour or change of attitude, demeanour or behaviour may be more subtle than obvious signs of injury or disclosure.
- Any member of staff who has a concern for a child or young person, however significant this may appear to be should seek advice from one of the Child Protection Team immediately. Concerns that are more serious must be reported immediately and brought to the attention of the DCPC as soon as possible. If the DCPC is not available the substitute DCPC should be consulted.
- If a child or young person makes a disclosure of abuse to any member of staff they should follow the Academy's procedure below:
  - a) Allow the child or young person to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way.
  - b) Avoid interrupting; instead it is vital to engage in attentive and reflective listening, only seeking clarification of what has been disclosed if necessary.
  - c) Never ask leading questions or probe for more information or details that the child does not volunteer.
  - d) Reassure the child or young person that they have been heard and believed and it is of utmost importance that the member of staff explains to the child that what has been said will be passed on to the Child Protection Team as soon as possible.
  - e) Never speculate to the child what the outcome of the disclosure will be or make promises. It is important that the child understands the next step as being passed on to the DCPC.
  - f) Details of the conversation should be recorded as written evidence immediately and passed to the Child Protection team. The DCPC or substitute DCPC must be informed (Ref. Points 8 and 9).
- Student Development Leaders and Attendance Officer to inform Mini-School Leaders and Senior Pastoral Manager on an ongoing basis, where persistent absence could be indicative of underlying Child Protection issues.

## **9. Record Keeping**

All staff can play a vital role in helping to ensure that children are safe from risk of harm. Staff through effective monitoring and record keeping can help those children who are in need or at risk. Any incident or noticeable behavioural change in a child or young person that gives cause for concern should be recorded in writing and passed to the child's Head of House. It is important that records are factual and reflect the words used by the child or young person. Opinion or supposition should not be recorded. All

records must be signed and dated by the member of staff with timings if appropriate. It is important to remember that any issues are confidential and that staff should be informed on a need to know basis.

Any member of staff may consult the advice of a member of the Child Protection team and may pass recorded information direct. It is the responsibility of the DCPC to ensure that evidence is collated and filed securely.

#### **10. Formal Information to be recorded**

Written records of abuse or concerns that are to be forwarded to Social Services should contain the following information:

- Child's name and date of birth.
- An outline of the child in normal context e.g. behaviour and attitude.
- The incident(s) which give rise for concern with date(s) and time(s).
- A verbatim record of what the child or young person has said.
- If recording evidence of bruising or other injuries indicate the position, colour, size, shape and time on a body map. It is essential that staff do not examine injuries. It is only the Academy Nurse or similar welfare assistant (accompanied by a member of senior staff of the same sex as the student) should carry out a non-obtrusive examination.
- Action taken by the school. These basic details are vital to the process of gathering information and do not constitute an investigation. Written information should be passed to the DCPC. The Principal should always be kept informed of any significant issues.

When seeking clarity of information to be recorded, it is often helpful to follow the principles of 'WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and HOW'. The first 4 of these being critical at stage 1.

Any records containing information about staff, in the case of allegations made against them, will be kept on that staff member's file for any necessary future reference.

#### **11. Storage of Records**

The DCPC should ensure that records relating to concerns for the welfare or safety of children and young people are kept separately from other Academy files and are stored securely. Information will be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and in line with child protection policy guidance. These records do remain part of the child's education files and will be forwarded to any new school.

#### **12. Referrals to Social Services**

- Any member of staff may raise concerns with the Child Protection Team but it is the responsibility of the DCPC to decide when to make a referral to the Social Services Directorate. In some cases, the DCPC may choose to first seek advice from the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection). Advice may also be sought from the Social Services Duty Team. Issues discussed may include the gravity and urgency of the concerns and the extent to which parents / carers are made aware of these. Consultation from the Area Children's Officer or the Social Services Duty Team is available to any member of staff, but it is recommended that concerns are shared with the Academy Child Protection Team and then decisions about consultations and referrals made.

- Some concerns may be monitored over a period of time before a decision is taken to refer to Social Services.
- In all but the most exceptional cases it is normal practice for parents / carers to be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage and if a referral is made that parents / carers are informed about the nature of the referral. In cases where communication with parents / carers regarding the nature of the referral may put the child or young person at further risk then the DCPC may take the decision to refer directly to Social Services having consulted with the Area Children's Officer. Clear reasons for suspecting further risk will be recorded onto the referral form.
- Referrals to Social Services will be made using Kent's inter-agency referral form: Initial Assessment and Referral Form for Children in Need to Social Services. Copies of this form are held by the DCPC. In situations where the concerns are deemed as grave or urgent, a telephone referral will be made and followed up with the completion of the form. Referral forms are faxed to the duty social services office.
- If a child or young person is referred, the DCPC will ensure that the Principal and other relevant staff are informed of this on a need-to-know basis.

### **13. Child Protection Concerns Involving a Member of Staff**

- Any concerns that involve an allegation against a member of staff should be referred immediately to the Executive Principal or Head of School who will contact the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection) to discuss and agree further action to be taken.
- Any concerns that involve an allegation against the Head of School should be referred immediately to the Executive Principal and Chair of The Governing Body either of whom will contact the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection) to discuss and agree further action to be taken.
- Any concerns that involve an allegation against the Executive Principal should be referred immediately to the Chair of The Governing Body who will contact the Area Children's Officer (Child Protection) to discuss and agree further action to be taken.
- The comprehensive document 'Child Protection Procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff' is held by the Principal and the DCPC. Its guidelines will determine the procedure that the Principal will follow.
- All members of staff should 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. (See Policy on Whistleblowing).
- As for all issues involving Child Protection, the principle rule is 'When in doubt – consult'.

### **14. Code of Practice for Staff**

- All members of staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with relation to Child Protection. It is advisable to conduct interviews or work with individual students in the company or view of other adults.
- Staff should take care when it may become necessary to use physical intervention. This option should be used with caution and only in circumstances where a child may pose a danger to him/herself or to others. In the event of physical intervention being used, the details of the incident must be recorded in writing and signed by a

witness. The notes should then be passed to the relevant senior pastoral staff with a copy held on the student's file.

- Staff should be made aware of the Academy's Policy on Behaviour Management as well as the Policy on the Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Students.
- If a child or young person makes a disclosure, it is essential that staff do not make any promises to keep certain information confidential. Instead, staff should explain that they and the Academy have a duty to help keep that child or young person safe and this may involve informing a member of the Child Protection team. Staff should seek to reassure the child or young person that they have acted responsibly in bringing the issue to them.
- It is important that members of staff do not speculate with the child or young person what the outcome of the disclosure will be.

### **15. Supervision and Support**

Any member of staff who is affected by issues arising from concerns for a child's or young person's welfare or safety should seek support from the DCPC or a member of the Child Protection Team.