

## THE PARK SCHOOL (YEOVIL) LTD

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT

The safety and well being of all our pupils at The Park school is our highest priority. Our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment, so that every pupil can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop his/her full potential and feel positive about him/herself as an individual. All pupils should care for and support each other.

#### **Annual Report to the Governing Body on Safeguarding Children**

There is a statutory duty to provide an Annual Report to the Governing Body on Safeguarding Children which enable the Governing Body to monitor compliance with the requirements of "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007 and to identify areas for improvement.

A copy of the completed Annual Report should be appended to the minutes of the Governing Body meeting where the Safeguarding Report is given. A copy should be sent the Education Adviser – LSCP, B3N County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY. A further copy should be filed in the Head teacher's office.

All members of the Governing Body should be fully conversant with the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and are jointly and severally responsible for testing staff knowledge of the document on a regular basis.

All staff training requirements stated in the report must be met. **The current regulations require;**

- training (updated every two years) in child protection and inter-agency working for the designated person(s);
- training in child protection (updated every three years) for the head and all staff, and that part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the arrangements.

#### SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

All staff recruited to the school must be covered by the Vetting and Barring Regulations.

The Park school follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau before starting work. All Governors, volunteer helpers, contractors working regularly during term-time, such as contract catering staff, [and adult members of the families of members of staff who live on site] are also vetted. Our policies are reviewed by Governors annually

If any member of staff is dismissed for inappropriate behaviour they will be reported to ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority).

The School shall have the following nominated persons in place at all times **with the status and authority to take responsibility for child protection matters:**

Designated Child Protection Senior Person	Mr Paul Bate
Deputy Designate Child Protection Office	Mrs Viv Wiles
Child Protection Governor	Mr Kevin Chapman
SEN Child Officer (SENCO)	Mrs Viv Wiles Senior Department
“ “ “	Mrs Marion Partington
SEN Issues Governor	Mrs Sylvie Dare

The governing body is therefore accountable for ensuring that the school has effective child protection policies and procedures in place that are in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families. Any LA guidance, and locally agreed inter-agency procedures (Chapter 16, 54-63, Guide to Law for Governors, March 2009)

As well as our statutory duty under the Children Act 1989, and as set out in the Children's Act 2004 (Every Child Matters) The Park School has a pastoral responsibility towards pupils and we therefore recognise that pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. This policy is therefore developed to reflect our duties and responsibilities and sets out the procedures to be followed by Governors and all Staff for the handling of all cases of suspected abuse. **Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.**

## **TRANSPARENCY**

The Park school prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection are on our web site, and we hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the school. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always investigate any concerns thoroughly. Open communications are essential.

The governing body will undertake an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

## **Suspected Abuse**

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

However, it is **not** the responsibility of school staff to investigate suspected abuse **it must be reported immediately** to the designated teacher. The school is not an investigation or intervention agency for child protection but it has an important role to play at the recognition and referral stages. All staff should be trained in the correct procedure to follow if abuse is reported to them. This procedure should be communicated by the designated teacher to **newly appointed staff** as part of the induction procedure. Thereafter newly appointed staff will be booked onto the first available approved training course.

As a school not maintained by the local authority, the Park School will establish and maintain links with the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) which is the local authority joint forum for developing, monitoring and reviewing child protection policies.

The following procedures for handling suspected cases of abuse including procedures to be followed if a teacher or other member of staff is accused of abuse are consistent with those laid down by the Somerset Area Child Protection Handbook referred to above.

## **Inspection of this School's Child Protection Procedures**

As part of the evaluation of the school in relation to pupils' welfare, health and guidance inspectors will look at this school's child protection policy and procedures.

## **The Role of the Designated Teacher**

The School will identify a senior member of staff as the "designated teacher" with specific responsibility for co-ordinating action in the school and liaising with social services departments and other agencies over suspected or actual cases of child abuse. In all cases where abuse is suspected or a sustainable allegation is made, teachers and other members of staff should report the information to the designated teacher. A second teacher will be trained and take over the responsibility in the absence of the designated teacher.

Designated teachers need to know and will **receive appropriate training** on:

- how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral
- the local ACPC child protection procedures and the designated teacher's role within them
- the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them
- the requirements of record keeping
- the conduct of a child protection conference and how the designated teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it.

## **Children with Special Educational Needs**

Where abuse is suspected, pupils who have difficulties in communicating should be given the opportunity to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

## **Confidentiality, Report and Records**

The degree of confidentiality in child protection work is governed by the need to protect the child. However, the Park School has a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important to explain to the child that the member of staff has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies on a need to know basis. Heads, teachers and other members of school staff should share information only within appropriate professional contexts and child protection records should be kept securely locked.

Child protection records and reports should be objective and based on evidence. They should distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. Reports may be made available to the child's parents at the child protection conference.

## **Conferences and Pupils on the Child Protection Register**

In any case where the School has been notified by the social services department that a pupil's name is on the Child Protection Register, the school will monitor and support that pupil in line with what has been agreed in the individual child protection plan which has been decided at the child protection conference. This plan sets out the role of the child's parents and various agencies in protecting the child.

If the child changes school, the Park School will transfer the information to the child's new school immediately and will inform the key worker from the social services department.

## **The Curriculum as a Preventive Influence**

The Governors will need to consider (have considered) whether, and if so how they wish the curriculum to include education about sexual abuse. This may be within PS&CE or a subject context such as English Literature.

## **Guidance for Staff**

The Park school aims to provide guidance for staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil, and so on)

## **Identifying Abuse**

The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- repeated minor injuries
- children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- an air of 'detachment' or 'don't care' attitude
- overly compliant behaviour
- a 'watchful attitude'
- sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- a child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason
- does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- 'tummy pains' with no medical reason
- eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite

- disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- running away from home, suicide attempts
- self inflicted wounds
- reverting to younger behaviour
- depression, withdrawal
- relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- pregnancy

These signs are not evidence themselves; but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts.

## **Sexual Abuse**

In guidance to its staff the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), defines child sexual abuse as “the involvement of children in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family life”.

From the NSPCC published booklet outlining signs of sexual abuse, we list the following as signs which are most likely to be displayed in a school situation although it is emphasised that these may be exhibited by children suffering from stress for a variety of other reasons:

- sudden changes in behaviour and/or deterioration of performance
- anxiety and/or low self-esteem
- knowledge of sexual matters beyond what would be expected
- strong need of affection sometimes expressed in physical terms
- difficulty in trusting or defiance of teachers
- fear of school medical examinations
- soreness in the genital or mouth areas possibly causing reluctance to change for PE
- vague pains or aches possibly arising from psychosomatic illnesses

Like the NSPCC, we consider it to be important that a pupil who reports that he or she is being sexually abused should be believed in the first instance. If a pupil reveals the abuse to a friend, the third party’s concern must not be dismissed.

## **STAFF/VOLUNTEERS FACING AN ALLEGATION OF CHILD PHYSICAL/SEXUAL ABUSE**

Staff/volunteers, because of their daily contact with children in a variety of situations including the wider caring role, are vulnerable to accusations of abuse. Their relationships with pupils may lead to allegations being against them being made by pupils or parents or persons with parental responsibility.

The following policies and procedures set out clearly how we should manage situations where there are allegations of abuse.

**There should be no automatic presumption of guilt against the accused.**

### **1 Listening to Pupils**

- Pupils who report that they have been abused by a member of staff must be listened to and heard, whatever form their attempts to communicate their worries.
- A written, dated record should be made of the allegations, as soon as practicable (and certainly within 24 hours).
- Teachers, governors or other members of staff cannot promise confidentiality to pupils who make allegations (see first page). If a pupil does not wish to take the matter further, very careful consideration must be given to the age and understanding of the pupil and whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm.

- **The need to avoid asking leading questions**
- Teachers, governors or other members of staff who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Head. **Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should be reported to the head. If the head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the chair of governors.** If the allegation is against the Head, the separate guidelines in respect of such circumstances should be followed. **In case of serious harm the police should be informed from the outset.**

## **2 Consideration of whether there is substance in an allegation**

- When an allegation is made against a teacher, there should be an urgent initial consideration by the Head as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant an investigation.
- The Head should consult the Social Services Officer as part of the initial consideration **within 24 hours.**
- The substantive decision on whether to investigate under local child protection procedures rests with the child protection agencies.
- There would be one of four possible outcomes of the initial consideration:
  - An immediate referral under the child protection procedure.
  - There is reason to suppose abuse could have occurred and that referral under the local child protection procedure or under the school's disciplinary procedures may be necessary.
  - That the allegation is apparently without foundation.
  - That the allegation was prompted by inappropriate behaviour which needs to be considered under the school's disciplinary procedures.

## **3 Allegations which call for immediate referral**

The immediate priority must be to determine whether a pupil is, or pupils are, at risk of significant harm and in need of protection. If this appears to be the case, the Head or designated teacher should make an urgent referral to local child protection agencies in accordance with the Area Child Protection Committee.

## **4 Allegations where a referral may be necessary**

- It is important for the Head to act quickly.
- The Head is not expected to investigate the allegation itself, or interview pupils, but to consider, in consultation with the social services, whether the allegation requires further investigation and if so, by whom.
- If the allegation was trivial or demonstrably false a further investigation would *not* be warranted.

## **5 Investigations**

- There would be two possible types of investigation:
  - By the police, social services or NSPCC under local child protection procedures
  - Under teacher disciplinary procedures
- Any disciplinary process should be separated clearly from child protection investigations. The child protection process has different objectives from the disciplinary procedure and the two should not be confused.
- Any investigation by the police or child protection agencies will take priority over an internal investigation by the school and an internal investigation should be held in abeyance pending the outcome of an external investigation.

## **6 Action Subsequent to referral to Child Protection Agencies**

- In cases of allegation against teachers, the Head should be involved in the strategy discussion to plan the conduct of the investigation under child protection procedures.
- The strategy discussion must also consider whether any other children are likely to be, or have been, at risk and may consider interviewing any other children.

## **7 Police Involvement**

- The police might wish to interview the teacher against whom the allegation has been made before any approach is made by the Head.
- Police officers should be given every assistance with their enquiries but, in the teacher's interests, confidentiality about the enquiries should be maintained.

## **8 Notification of interested persons**

7.1 Unless there is an objection by the child protection agency concerned, the Head should:

- (a) inform the pupil, pupils or parent making the allegation and explain the likely course of action
- (b) ensure the pupil or pupil's parents are informed of the likely course of action
- (c) inform the teacher against whom the allegation is made and explain the likely course of action
- (d) inform the Chair of Governors.

## **9 Considering Whether Suspension is Appropriate**

- Heads should not automatically suspend or recommend suspension of a teacher against whom an allegation is made.
- Circumstances in which suspension would properly occur include:
  - where a pupil is or pupils are at risk
  - where the allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct may be considered
  - where a suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded
- In all cases where suspension is being considered, the Head should advise the teacher to seek assistance from his or her teacher organisation.
- Where a teacher has been suspended, the Head should inform the Chair of Governors.
- It is not necessary to provide more than the minimum information necessary to the governing body, as more than this will prejudice governors' impartiality in any subsequent hearing or appeal in disciplinary proceedings.
- The pupil of a parent making the allegation, and the parents of the child so far as is consistent with child protection procedures, should be informed confidentially of the suspension.
- Support must be provided for the pupils or pupils making the allegations and their parents and consideration should also be given to what support may be needed for others at the school, both staff and pupils.
- At the end of the investigation, a meeting should be arranged to inform the teacher of the next steps and the teacher may be accompanied or represented by a teacher organisation representative or friend.

## **10 Child Welfare Issues**

- The investigating team, in assessing the developmental stage of the pupil may request professional help from a teacher regarded as being valuable to the team.

- In some instances the Head or a Teacher, particularly where the pupil requests it, may be called upon to accompany a pupil who is very young or distressed as a supportive adult in the making of video recordings for criminal proceedings

### **11 Specific Additional EYFS requirements;**

- designate a practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate (Ofsted currently allows this role to be assumed by a member of staff who does not specifically work within EYFS);
- inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations;
- inform Ofsted of the above, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.
- Due to the Boarding at the school, under National Minimum Standard 3 (3.1 to 3.9), additional elements apply and the policy is also for staff, any adults working in the school and older boarders in positions of responsibility.
- arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from children in cases where a member of boarding staff is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature.
- Alternative arrangements will be made for those in out of school care

### **12 Communicating this document to all members of the governing body, teachers and all other staff.**

- Reference to this document and where it can be accessed should be notified to all members of the governing body, teachers and all other staff once it has been ratified by the Governors.
- Thereafter, reference to this document and where it can be accessed should be notified to all new governors and members of staff at induction as an integral part of the induction procedure.

### **13 Allegations against the Head**

- Any allegation against the Head should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors, **without notifying the head first**. The Chair should initiate an immediate investigation with the governing body in accordance with the procedures detailed in this policy.

### **14 Ceasing to use a persons services**

- Any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children must be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of leaving the school. Address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111).

### **Additional educational needs lists for Junior and Senior departments at Schedule 1**

### **Student health issues lists for Junior and Senior departments Schedule 2**

(The above schedules should always carry the date on which they were last updated and should be amended as part of this document whenever a new name is added or deleted.)

#### **Contact details for agency involvement;**

Somerset Social Services

Somerset Direct

Childrens Team

PO Box 618

TA1 3WF Telephone; 0845 345 9122