



# **Sheerhatch Primary School**

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**Issued by:**

**Date:**

**Review:**

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Designated Governor For Safeguarding:	Vicky Maples
Date Last Reviewed:	June 2017

## Introduction

This policy aims to provide all members of staff (paid and unpaid), children and young people, and their families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring that all children in the school are protected from harm, both while at school and when away from the school premises.

Practitioners who work with children in this school will read this policy within the framework of:

- Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection Procedures <http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015)
- Information Sharing Practice Guidance (2015)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Guidance for safer working practices for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2015
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

As a school, Sheerhatch Primary School believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people's development and learning, and keeping children safe.

## Ofsted's definition of safeguarding

Ofsted's definition of safeguarding as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' March 2015:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and learners from:

- Neglect,
- physical abuse,
- sexual abuse,
- emotional abuse,
- bullying including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying,
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse,
- gender based violence /violence against women and girls,
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour,
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking,
- the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour e.g. sexting,
- teenage relationship abuse,
- substance misuse,
- issues specific to a local population e.g. gang violence,
- female genital mutilation,
- forced marriage,
- fabricated or induced illness,
- poor parenting,
- other issues that pose a risk to children.

"Safeguarding is not just about protecting children....from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Children's and learners' health and safety and well being
- The use of reasonable force
- Meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions
- Providing first aid
- Intimate care and emotional well being
- Online safety and associated issues
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure children's and learners' security, taking into account the local context."

*-Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings August 2015*

This policy should therefore be understood alongside school policies on related safeguarding issues.

## **Ethos:**

We understand that emotional and social aspects of learning create a foundation for all academic learning. If a child has not been supported to understand, express and resolve their feelings, they may not have the ability to share with other children, resolve the small conflicts that arise in day-to-day classroom life, or concentrate on learning. Their frustrations may cause a range of antisocial, disruptive, overly compliant or withdrawn behaviours.

All staff will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training.

All staff who work with children will have appropriate checks carried out to ensure they are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009. Education staff play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, at an early stage.

Sheerhatch Primary School is committed to referring those concerns via the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the appropriate organisation, normally local authority children's social care, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and, where appropriate, to ongoing action to meet those needs.

In order to ensure children are adequately protected, we will ensure that:

- We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two Deputy DSL who attend multi-agency training at least once every two years
- All staff are trained in basic Child Protection awareness every three years
- All staff have read and understand the Child Protection Policy and are aware of the indicators of child abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by children
- All children, young people and their families are familiar with the Child Protection Policy
- The child protection policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the DSL and the board of Governors.

## Recognising Abuse

The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 state that a **child** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of **significant harm** as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development:

- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. This can also occur when a child is a young carer for a parent who is disabled, has mental health problems or misuses alcohol or drugs.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another – for example where there is fighting or violence in the home.
- It may involve serious bullying (including via electronic media), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

For more information, see our Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
  - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
  - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Special Circumstances**

The Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures outline responses to special circumstances in child protection cases, including issues such as:

- Bullying
- Domestic violence
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Gangs, serious youth violence and violent extremism
- 'Honour'-based violence
- Information and communication technology (ICT)-based forms of abuse
- Missing from care and home
- Not attending school
- Parental lack of control
- Parental mental illness
- Parents with learning disabilities
- Parents who misuse substances
- Pregnancy
- Private fostering
- Self-harming and suicidal behaviour
- Sexually active children
- Sexually exploited children
- Spirit possession or witchcraft
- Trafficked and exploited children
- Young carers

## **The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) takes the lead responsibility for child protection, including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies and staff training. Most settings have one DSL although it is good practice for settings to also have a Deputy DSL. Usually, the DSL is also the named person who responds to [allegations](#) made against members of staff.

The DSL should be a senior member of staff with the authority and seniority to carry out the functions of the role.

### **DSL Responsibilities**

- Refer suspected abuse and neglect to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Report [allegations](#) made against members of staff to the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO (and Ofsted if Early Years /Play Providers /Childminders)
- Develop and update the [Child Protection and other safeguarding policies](#), ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns
- Keep the Head teacher informed about any issues that arise
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting
- Ensure that a child's child protection file is copied for the new educational establishment when a child moves educational settings, and that this file is transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate [Child Protection and Safeguarding Training](#), and maintain training records
- Cooperate with any requests for information from the local authority, such as Child Protection training returns and self-evaluative forms for safeguarding and child protection, in compliance with Section 11, Children Act 2004.

### **Responsibilities of other staff members**

It is the responsibility of all other members of staff to ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported to the DSL as soon as reasonably possible.

The DSL may have other information regarding a child, young person or their family of which other staff may not be aware. Minor concerns may take on greater significance within the wider context of knowledge of a child or family that the DSL may have.

All staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and should always act in the best interests of the child.

All staff members should also receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

All staff should be aware of systems within the school/setting which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction.

## Child Protection Procedures

**1. You have a concern about a child / young person's wellbeing**, based on:

- a) Something the child / young person / parent has told you
- b) Something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
- c) Something another professional said or did

Even if you think your concern is minor, the DCPO may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child.

It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns, but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.

**2. Decide whether you need to find out more** by asking the child / young person, or their parent to clarify your concerns, being careful to use open questions, beginning with words like: 'how', 'why', 'where', 'when', 'who'?

**3. Let the child / young person / parent know what you plan to do next** if you have heard a disclosure of abuse or you are talking with them about your concerns.

**Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret.**

Example: 'I am worried about your bruise and I need to tell Mrs Smith so that she can help us think about how to keep you safe'.

**4. Inform the DSL immediately.** If the DSL is not available, inform their Deputy. If neither of these staff members are available, speak to the Head teacher or another senior member of staff. If there is no other member of staff available, you must make the referral yourself.

**5. Make a written record** as soon as possible after the event, noting:

- a) Name of child
- b) Date, time and place
- c) Who else was present
- d) What was said / What happened / What did you notice  
speech, behaviour, mood, drawings, games or appearance
- e) If the child or parent spoke, record their words rather than your interpretation
- f) Analysis of what you observed and why it is a cause for concern.

**6. The DSL may take advice from the MASH.**

7. The DSL makes the **referral to MASH**.

The referral will note all previous interventions by the school with the child, any relevant history relating to the child, their siblings or the family. There is a multi-agency enquiry form on the Bedford Safeguarding Children Board website. The child may be the responsibility of another local authority depending on their home address or legal status, but the MASH are still the first point of contact.

8. The **DSL shares information with other relevant professionals**, recording reasons for sharing information and ensuring that they are aware of what action the other professionals will take as a result of information shared.

9. The **DSL informs parent that they have made a CP referral**, if the parent does not already know, and if there is no reason not to let them know.

MASH may suggest to delay informing the parent in cases of suspected sexual abuse, or where informing the parent might put the child at further risk, to prevent the child being harmed or intimidated (and retracting their disclosure).

In cases of suspected Fabricated or Induced Illness by proxy, the parent is not informed that this is being considered.

10. The **DSL remains in close communication with other professionals around the child / young person** and with the family, in order to share any updates about the child / young person.

If a child protection investigation is pursued, the DSL and other key school staff will:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, to keep the child / young person safe
- Attend a child protection conference when invited and provide updated information about the child
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.
- Attend core group meetings and take an active role in the implementation of the protection plan.

***The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.***

## **Safe Practice**

### **Safer Recruitment**

[Safeguarding Children in Education \(2015\)](#) outlines Safer Recruitment processes in education settings. At least one member of staff on every recruitment panel has undertaken training in [Safer Recruitment](#).

Safer Recruitment processes aim to:

1. Deter potential abusers by setting high standards of practice and recruitment.
2. Reject inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages
3. Prevent abuse to children by developing robust policies and agreeing on safe practice

### **Allegations Against Staff**

Allegations of abuse can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults.

All allegations against staff or volunteers should be immediately brought to the attention of the Head teacher.

If an allegation is made against the Head teacher, this should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Governors.

In all cases, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) should be notified.

#### **The Head teacher should take the following actions:**

- Ensure that the child reporting the allegation is safe and away from the member of staff against whom the allegation is made
- Contact the LADO in Bedford Borough immediately
- Contact the parents/carers of the child, following advice from the LADO
- Following advice from the LADO, review the member of staff's working arrangements, and if no safe alternative identified suspend the member of staff pending the investigation
- Attend strategy meetings convened by the LADO and act upon the decisions made at these meetings

#### **Suspension should be considered when:**

- There is a cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Any disciplinary investigation should be carried out once the child protection investigation has been completed.

## **Visitors**

- No visitors, including tradespeople, should be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present
- Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose
- Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless written notification has been received in advance.

## **Supporting School Provision**

Many other aspects of school provision support the aims of this policy. Schools play an important role in making children and young people aware both of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable, and of how they can help keep themselves safe.

The non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides opportunities for children and young people to learn about keeping safe. PSHE curriculum materials provide resources that enable schools to tackle issues regarding healthy relationships, including domestic violence, bullying and abuse. Discussions about personal safety and keeping safe can reinforce the message that any kind of violence is unacceptable, let children and young people know that it is acceptable to talk about their own problems, and signpost sources of help.

Other aspects of provision that support this policy are:

- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)
- Citizenship Curriculum
- Sexual Health Initiatives
- School Nurse checks

## **Use of Force, Restraint and Positive Handling**

The law forbids a teacher or other members of staff from using any degree of physical contact that is deliberately intended to punish a pupil, or that is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation.

Teachers at a school are allowed to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils under certain circumstances. In some circumstances, teachers and authorised members of staff can restrain pupils in order to protect them and others.

Any concerns or allegations that a member of staff may have acted inappropriately should be brought to the Head teacher immediately, in confidence. The Head teacher, in turn, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

The current guidance is: *Use of reasonable force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies.* Reviewed July 2015.

## **Staff Conduct**

In order to protect children, young people and members of staff, we encourage staff to follow our professional code of conduct. This covers appropriate dress, the use of appropriate boundaries, social contact outside the setting (including on social networking sites), the receiving and giving of gifts and favouritism, and the safe use of technology.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Being alone with the child / young person
- Physical contact / restraint
- Social contact outside setting / appropriate boundaries
- Gifts & favouritism
- Behaviour management
- Intimate care
- Safe use of technology (Security / Internet / mobile phones / digital images of children, etc)
- Appropriate use of social networking sites

Appropriate and safe staff conduct is supported in the following documents:

- *Statement of Procedures for dealing with [Allegations of Abuse Against Staff](#)*
- *Central Record of Recruitment & Vetting Procedures*
- *Equality Information & Objectives Statement*
- *Staff Discipline, Conduct & Grievance Procedure*
- *Confidential Reporting & Whistleblowing Policy*

## **Child Protection Training**

The DSL will keep detailed records of all staff's child protection training and will issue reminders when training updates are required. It is good practice to include a safeguarding and child protection agenda item in all staff meetings.

All paid and unpaid members of staff, including school governors, undertake single-agency, basic awareness child protection training once every three years.

In addition, the Designated members of staff will undertake multi-agency training every two years.

## **Implementation, Dissemination & Review Strategies**

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL and is approved by the Board of Governors.

All members of staff read and agree to the child protection policy before the start of their employment.

All children, young people and their families will be made aware of the policy before enrolment. It is important for families to be aware of actions staff may take if there are any concerns for a child or a young person's safety, and for them to understand that they might not be consulted before action is taken. Knowing about child protection procedures ahead of time helps parents to engage better in the process, meaning that change is more likely to take place.

Copies of this policy and supporting materials, such as the Bedford Borough Child Protection Procedures and Safeguarding Children in Education (2015) are easily accessible on the Beds Borough website

**Please note that the procedures are updated regularly therefore the accurate version is always the on-line version on the Safeguarding Board website.**

### **Useful Contacts:**

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – Tel: 01234 718700**

**[multiagency@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:multiagency@bedford.gov.uk)**

**Local Authority Designated Officer – Tel: 01234 276693**

**[lado@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:lado@bedford.gov.uk)**

**Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board – Tel: 01234 276512 or email:**

**[lscb@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:lscb@bedford.gov.uk) or website: [www.bedford.gov.uk/lscb](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/lscb)**

**Children Missing Education Officer (Debi Momi) – Tel: 01234 228178**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. The policy was approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on:

Signed by Head Teacher .....

Signed by Chair of Governors .....