

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Objective

Lingfield Notre Dame fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working at the school.

‘Every child deserves the right to grow up in a safe and secure environment where they are protected from harm and have the chance to fulfil their potential. All those involved in working with and caring for children have a duty to do everything they can to ensure this is the outcome for all children’.
M. Hodge MP.

Everyone at Lingfield Notre Dame shares an objective to help keep children safe by working to:

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- identify children who are at risk of, or likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe
- raise awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- ensure we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- develop and then implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- support pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

The welfare of the child is paramount!

Who is responsible?

The duty to “safeguard and promote children’s welfare” is part of the programme of Change for Children, which began with the publication of “every Child Matters”. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the community is everyone’s responsibility, even if they do not have specific organisational responsibility or statutory authority to intervene in the lives of children and their families.

All staff and volunteers (including temporary and supply staff) have an integral responsibility in being alert to the signs of abuse and ensuring that the school environment is safe and secure for children and that appropriate procedures are followed. The responsibility to refer children thought to be at risk rests with the person who has the concern.

The Child Protection Officer (CPLO) – Mrs J. Shackel (Junior School), Mrs F. Halpin (Senior School), will co-ordinate and oversee the operation of the procedures contained in this document with regard to suspected or actual cases of child abuse and will bring to the notice of the Principal relevant concerns expressed about individual children or staff.

A member of staff will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaise with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.

Investigation of cases must be left to the Social Services Department or other appropriate agencies.

The Principal will be responsible for liaising with the Social Services Department over suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

The school has a nominated governor responsible for child protection.

Staff Training

The CPLOs and Principal will have attended appropriate up-to-date training (every two years) to equip them to carry out responsibilities for Child Protection effectively. The CPLOs will be responsible for keeping staff up to date. This may be done via staff meetings and a booklet called 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' (Nov 2007), which is distributed to all new staff, as well as Heads of Department, Heads of Year, Junior School Staff, Support Staff and P.E. staff. This also contains details about signs of abuse and appendices with forms to be used when there are concerns. There is also a booklet called 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child is Being Abused'. This is distributed to all the above staff as well as catering, maintenance and contractors. There will be whole staff inset every three years and new staff will receive training within 3 months of starting or during induction. Staff may also look on the website www.surreycafis.org.uk/safeguarding and choose SSCB Procedural Framework, where they can find procedures and protocols when needed.

Communication

The school aims to:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to e.g. school council, circle time
- include opportunities in the PSHCE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to stay safe (including appropriate sex and drugs education)

Pupils may receive support and guidance within school from a range of adults.

- In the Junior School, all pupils have PSHCE/SMSC lessons which address the issues of growing up safely & healthily. Year 6 pupils also attend the West Sussex Junior Citizen Day, which teaches them about safety, drug awareness and other important issues. For younger pupils there is Circle Time, where we hope to create a comfortable forum for discussion. There are also regular assemblies which discuss issues of child safety and behaviour. Class teachers are made aware of child protection procedures and communicate any concerns immediately.
- Speakers are invited in to talk to pupils about subjects such as drug awareness, internet safety and personal safety.

- At Key Stage 3 Personal Safety is discussed and taught in PSHCE/SMSC and in Key Stage 4 similar issues are discussed and taught as well as Domestic Violence.
- In the Senior School there are displays of helpful information for National Children's help lines in both the sick room and 6th Form Common Room. There are also posters in every cloakroom and washroom in the Senior School. Children are encouraged by staff to use the information on these boards if they have any concerns.
- In the Junior School there are also Child Line Posters visible to pupils.
- There is a 'Worry Box' outside the office in the Senior School to encourage children to express concerns.

Procedure if abuse is suspected

If a child is suspected of suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm (i.e. physical injury, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, failure to thrive), the teacher or other member of staff, will inform the CPLO via a 'Child Protection Expression of Concern Form'. The CPLO will then be responsible for making immediate representation to the Principal. There must be no attempt by the school to contact the parents before informing Social Services, or to work with the family to the point of excluding Social Services. The same procedure applies to abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil.

If a child/person discloses abuse:

- listen
- never stop the child/person who is freely recalling significant events
- do not question or prompt
- explain that you are concerned for his/her well being and it will be necessary to pass any information to the relevant authorities
- record the information given and action taken – taking care to record the timing, setting and the personnel present, as well as what was said in the person's 'actual' words
- take any necessary urgent action with regard to injury

The Principal (or in her absence a Deputy Head) will refer the matter to the Area/Local Social Services office (0208 541 7402) – advice or 08456 009 009 – referral) and will confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours and will include a copy of the notes of the discussion with the child/person.

In the case of EYFS, Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at 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. These must be done as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- the content of the curriculum
- the school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- the school behaviour policy
- liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, the Education Welfare Service and the Educational Psychology Services
- ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed

Sharing and Confidentiality

As a general rule all personal information acquired or held in the course of working with children and families should be treated as confidential and particular care should be taken with sensitive information. Information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Anyone receiving information, knowing it is confidential, is also subject to a duty of confidence. Whenever information is given or received in confidence there should be a clear understanding as to how it may be used or shared. It should be made clear that confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence. It is essential that information is shared with Social Services in case they have other information or if anything were to happen.

Keeping Records

It is important to keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Staff should complete the Child Protection Expression of Concern Form and give it to the CPLO. All child protection records are kept separately from the main file and securely locked. The school keeps these records until the child's 25th birthday or until the child transfers to another school. At this stage the records will be forwarded to the new school. If a child moves school his/her records should transfer also.

(The Data Protection Act & Human Rights Act should be considered)

Allegations against Staff

If it is suspected that a pupil is being abused by a member of staff or another student, the Principal and Child Protection Officer will investigate the matter. They may refer the matter to the Chairman of Governors, and will discuss the arrangements necessary for investigating the matter. Suspension should not be an automatic response to an allegation and all allegations should be dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently.

If the suspicion is against the Principal, the employee concerned will make his/her report directly to the Board of Governors.

After referral to social services has been made, the school's relationship with the parents of the young person(s) involved will need very sensitive handling,

whoever the suspected abuser may be and the CPLO has responsibility for having ongoing contact with the parents.

The school is required to report to the ISA within one month of leaving the school (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children (PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA, tel: 0300 123 1111)

Whistleblowing

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right!

Self Reporting

If a member of staff feels they have put themselves in a vulnerable position with a pupil, parent or member of staff then this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with their line manager.

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered.

Procedures for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers

Our website and our adverts for recruiting staff include the following statement: This School is committed to safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment by ensuring safe recruitment practices are always followed and that there are appropriately trained staff in the school.

All successful candidates will be subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks along with other relevant employment checks. Appropriate child protection checks and procedures also apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site. (See Safe Recruitment Policy)

Volunteers

Volunteers only need a CRB check if have 'regular contact' with children (3 or more times in 30 days, or once overnight). If they have no CRB check they should not be left unsupervised with children. This includes when on trips. They should also be made aware of the Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding

It is essential to carefully consider safeguarding both vulnerable people and the staff who have responsibility for them.

Staff must be mindful of not putting themselves in a difficult or potentially dangerous situation (see 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' – DCSF).

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the child protection arrangements must be remedied without delay.

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

Policies to consider/refer to:

- * Health & Safety Policy
- * Anti-Bullying Policy
- * Learning Support Policy
- * Flu Pandemic Policy
- * Equal Opportunity Policy
- * Behaviour Policy
- * First Aid Policy
- * Recruitment Policy

'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' - DCSF

Last updated by J Shackel 30.0.09

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or whenever appropriate