

**THE SIR BERNARD LOVELL SCHOOL**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**RATIONALE**

The welfare of students is of paramount importance and all staff have a duty to protect students from risk of harm or injury. This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. It sets out the principles behind the school's approach to dealing with suspected child abuse and the key points of our procedures; more detailed guidance appears in the Staff Handbook. In dealing with child protection issues, we will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and take account of the guidance issued in "Working Together To Safeguard Children (2005)". This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Bullying
- Restraint
- Special Education Needs
- Health and Safety
- Sex and Relationship Education

When dealing with child protection issues, we will:

- 1 ensure that our approach is in keeping with our wider curricular aims. We will seek to foster security, confidence and independence in students and through the personal social and health education programme we specifically encourage students to:
  - become more self aware and to develop a positive self-image
  - develop a greater understanding of relationships
  - become confident in recognising, accepting and expressing their feelings.
- 2 establish an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- 3 always be vigilant and open-minded concerning suspected abuse. We will follow up suspected abuse swiftly, and take urgent action if there is a risk of physical injury.
- 4 co-operate fully with other agencies, and ensure that records are transferred efficiently to other agencies or receiving schools. We will attend child protection case conferences as requested and notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student on the child protection register.
- 5 give students involved in child protection issues every support, and ensure that their views are fully represented at case conferences.
- 6 ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with our students.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Definitions**

Government guidelines say that child abuse occurs where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer “significant harm”; harm is defined as “ill treatment or the impairment of health or development”\*. The guidelines identify four main categories of abuse:

neglect  
physical injury  
sexual abuse  
and emotional abuse

### **Procedures**

If a member of staff suspects child abuse, they should report their concerns to the designated teacher who will then talk to the child. If a child discloses that they have been abused, staff should in the first instance:

**Listen** to what the student has to say, in a private and quiet place, then  
**Report** their concerns to the designated teacher and  
**Record** in detail the circumstances (including the nature and extent of any injuries), using the student’s own words, and note any action taken.

These notes should be written up as quickly as possible after the conversation with the child, and should be passed to the designated teacher within twenty-four hours.

The designated teacher will decide, in discussion with Social Services if appropriate, whether significant harm has occurred or is likely to occur. Students need to be told that their initial conversations with staff may have to be reported to the designated teacher, and that it may be necessary to report the situation to Social Services, who may need to take action. It is essential that staff do not find themselves in the position of guaranteeing confidentiality to a student in child protection matters.

All referrals to Social Services will be made using a Request for Single Service form. We will co-operate fully and promptly with requests for information for child protection conferences, and will, wherever possible, send to such conferences a member of staff who knows the child well (usually the Year Co-ordinator).

We respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to be consulted and involved in all decisions concerning their children, wherever possible. Parental permission to refer on to other agencies will only be dispensed with where this is clearly considered to be in the best interests of the child and legally sound. Parents will therefore be consulted about concerns unless there is reasonable cause to believe that doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child. Parents are made aware of the school’s responsibility in child protection matters through the school prospectus.

The designated teacher keeps a register of all young people with child protection issues along with all reports and records of suspected abuse in a secure file separate from students’ other records. Unlike other school records, parents do not have access to this file.

The designated teacher and the deputy designated teacher will work together to monitor the welfare and progress of children about whom child protection concerns have been raised.

The designated teacher will inform the tutor and year co-ordinator where suspected abuse has been notified to him/her. Staff should only share information about children and their families in

appropriate professional contexts.

We will appoint a nominated governor responsible for Child Protection, currently Chair of Governors.

If a student makes allegations against a member of staff, the designated teacher will liaise with the Head over the appropriate course of action. If allegations are made against the Head, the designated teacher will inform the education officer direct.

### **Staff training**

All staff have a duty to be alert to signs of abuse and to report concerns to the designated teacher. We will ensure that teaching and support staff have regularly updated training in abuse awareness and our procedures for dealing with suspected abuse. In the case of new staff, this will also form part of their induction programme; other staff will have their training updated at least every three years with an annual awareness raising briefing. The designated member of staff will receive regularly updated training through the Local Authority (LA).

## **CONCLUSION**

It is essential that we:

- deal with all suspicions of abuse swiftly, especially where there is a risk of physical danger
- keep an open and enquiring mind
- share information
- remember that abuse can occur in any family

Adopted: ..... Date: .....  
Head

Adopted: ..... Date: .....  
Chair of Governors

This policy will be reviewed annually.