

## CHILD PROTECTION (Safeguarding) POLICY

Last reviewed: January 2010

*This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.*

### Aim

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. There five main elements to our policy are to:

- ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children ( including CRB enhanced disclosures).
- raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- develop and then implementing 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
- establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried
- include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

A range of documents, circulars and guidance for good practice governs Child Protection work at Palmers Green High School. Key documents, which inform this policy, are:

- London Child Protection Procedures  
(This supersedes Enfield Child Protection Committee Procedures, which has been retained for information)
- Education Act 2002 – Section 157 (This supersedes DFEE circular 10/95)
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2003

- The Children Act 2004 (Commencement No.1) Order 2005
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (April 2008) CP10
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Every Child Matters (September 2008) CP12

The designated teacher for Child Protection is the Headmistress Mrs Edmundson and in her absence the Deputy Head Mrs Hammersley. Mrs Edmundson and Mrs Hammersley have been trained by Enfield Borough Council as designated teachers and have refresher courses every 2 years. The school has a nominated governor responsible for child protection who undertakes a regular review of this policy and procedures in the school. Child Protection is an agenda item (oral report) for the Governors' School Council Meetings held every term.

### **Prevention**

School takes seriously its duty of pastoral care and will be proactive in seeking to prevent children becoming victims of abuse or neglect. It will do this in a number of ways:

- Through the creation of an open culture which respects all individuals' rights and discourages bullying and discrimination of all kinds.
- By identifying a member of staff (Mrs Edmundson) who has overall responsibility for child protection matters. She has received specialist training in this field and acts as a source of advice and support to other school staff.
- By informing children of their rights to be free from harm and encouraging them to talk to school staff if they have any concerns.
- Through PSHE to promote self-esteem, social inclusion and address the issue of child protection in the wider context of child safety in general.

### **Partnership**

School believes that the best outcomes for children generally are achieved when professionals can work effectively with parents/carers. This belief holds equally in relation to child protection concerns. School believes in open and honest communication and will always share with parents/carers any information or concerns that they have about their children at the earliest opportunity. The only exception to this would be where it was felt that such communication might compromise the child's safety.

If a child is felt to be in need of protection and becomes the subject of a child protection plan, parents/carers should regard School as a source of help and support.

## School Procedures

1. Any member of staff with a possible issue or concern relating to Child Protection (it must be made clear to students that **CONFIDENTIALITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES**) should immediately discuss it with a senior member of staff who will inform the Designated Teacher. A serious concern must be taken directly to the Designated Teacher. Allegations of child abuse must be given the highest priority and referred immediately to the Headmistress.
2. The Headmistress will then decide on an appropriate course of action (based on ACPC guidelines). If there is a disclosure or suspicion of abuse the Headmistress will report the incident to Enfield County Council within 24hours.
3. **Allegations against school staff.** Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one to one basis with students and staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the **Headmistress** so that the ACPC and DFEE circular 10/95 procedures can be followed. If the allegation is against the Headmistress it should be taken directly to the Deputy Head and through her to the Chair of the Governors.
4. The school is required to inform the Secretary of State via the DCSF in Darlington, within in one month of leaving the school 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

## Suspected Child Abuse

Any member of staff who suspects or knows of abuse will refer the matter immediately to the designated teacher. There is no need to establish certainty and the child should not be questioned further to establish this. Where appropriate, arrangements should be made for the person to whom the disclosure has been made to stay with the child, or another appropriate person where the child will feel safe.

## Child/Child Abuse

In the event of physical or emotional abuse of one child by another, this will be taken seriously and dealt with through the school's anti-bullying policy.

If it emerges that a child is being bullied by a sibling who may not be a pupil, then school in the first instance will inform the children's parents of its concerns. If the problem persists and the pupil continues to be the victim of abuse, then school will refer its concerns to the Social Services Department.

In all matters of suspected sexual abuse, either victimisation or perpetration, school will refer its concerns to the Social Services Department.

### **Talking to Children**

It is not the responsibility of school staff to interview children about alleged abuse. That is the role of the police and Social Services. However, school staff, in particular the designated teacher, need to make enquiries of a child in order to gain sufficient information about whether a referral to the investigative agencies is needed.

It is acceptable to record what is seen on the body in the course of normal activities such as physical education, and to ask how a child may have come about a bruise. It is not however acceptable to undress and examine a child.

### **Monitoring and record keeping**

It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. These records should then be kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's school records. It is important to recognise that regulations published in 1989 do not authorise or require the disclosure to parents of any written information relating to Child Protection. The preferred practice is for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made (unless it relates to Sexual Abuse).

Staff must keep the Headmistress informed of:

- poor attendance and punctuality
- concerns about appearance and dress
- changed or unusual behaviour
- concerns about health and emotional well being
- deterioration in educational progress
- discussions with parents about concerns relating to the child
- concerns about home conditions or situations
- concerns about pupil on pupil abuse (including serious bullying)

When there is suspicion of significant harm to a child and a referral is made, as much information as possible should be given about the nature of the suspicions, the child and the family. Use of previous records (if available) may prove to be particularly useful in this aspect.

### **Recording Information**

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, it is essential that accurate, signed and dated records are kept.

These records will document every aspect of the case as it develops, including grounds for initial concerns, where appropriate description of injury to the child, notes of worrying behaviour and a note of what the child has said.

The designated teacher is responsible for recording information and collecting reports and notes from those involved in the case. The designated teacher should not collect statements from the child, but record or ask the person who initially listened to the child to record.

These records will be kept in a secure, confidential file, separate from the child's academic records. It is important to recognise that regulations published in 1989 do not authorise or require disclosure to parents of any written information relating to a

child's protection, although preferred practise is for parents to be informed where it does not compromise the safety of the child or related to sexual abuse.

For further guidance please refer to the document "Child Protection Records in Schools".

### **Staff Working in PGHS**

Parents can feel confident that careful procedures are in place to ensure that all staff appointed are suitable to work with children. All teaching staff and school assistants have been assessed and cleared by CRB. The staff have a basic training in Child Protection which is updated every 3 years. The last whole school training was April 2008. Peripatetic teachers and volunteers are made aware of the name of the designated person and have a meeting at the beginning of their employment/involvement in the school with their line manager to talk through this policy.

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

- To ensure that all staff know the Headmistress is responsible (and in her absence Mrs Hammersley for Child Protection issues).
- To refer promptly all cases of suspected child abuse to the local social services department or the police child protection team. If a parent arrives to collect the child before the social worker has arrived then it must be remembered that we have no right to prevent the removal of the child. However, if there are clear signs of physical risk or threat, the Police should be called.
- To maintain and update as necessary the Child Protection Monitoring List
- To organise regular training on Child Protection within the school
- To ensure that all staff know about and have access to ACPC guidelines
- To ensure Enfield's telephone procedures are followed
- To co-ordinate action where child abuse is suspected
- To facilitate and support the development of a whole school policy on Child Protection
- To attend case conferences or nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on her behalf
- Maintain records of case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure confidential file and to disseminate information about the child only on a "need to know basis".
- To pass on records and inform the key worker when a child who is on the Child Protection register leaves the school. The custodian of the register must also be informed
- To raise staff awareness and confidence on child protection procedures and to ensure new staff are aware of these procedures
- To keep up to date with current practice by participating in training opportunities wherever possible.