

Freemantles School

Child Protection Policy

Governors' Committee: SEN

Reviewed and readopted: September 2009

Next Review: September 2010



Introduction

The Governors and staff of Freemantles school fully recognise the responsibility they have to safeguard children and young people. The Governing Body holds the Headteacher to account by requiring that he/she reports regularly on Child Protection issues in addition to submitting an annual detailed report on safeguarding within the school.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child in a way that acknowledges the difficulties in understanding experienced by children and young people with autistic spectrum condition.

This policy is given to new staff on induction and redistributed to staff when updated. It is made available to parents through the school website on request and in the reception area of the school.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child or young person in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Children's Services
- To ensure that all adults within our school have been checked as to their suitability.

Procedures

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Surrey Safeguarding Children Board procedures. We will ensure that:

- There is a designated member of staff who undertakes regular training. This is the headteacher, who is the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO)
- The Deputy Headteacher takes over the role of CPLO in the absence of the Headteacher
- All members of staff develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse
- All members of staff know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures.

Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated.

All new members of staff will be given a copy of our child protection procedures as part of their induction into the school.

Responsibilities

The CPLO is responsible for:

- Adhering to the Surrey Safeguarding procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records
- Ensuring that an indication of further record keeping is marked on the pupil records
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to Surrey Children's Service.

In cases where there are safeguarding concerns which arise from the management of extreme physically challenging behaviours within the home or other environment, the CPLO may, in the first instance, discuss these with the appropriate social worker from the Children with Disabilities team.

Confidentiality

- We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.
- The CPLO will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets

Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the CPLO and to seek further support as appropriate

Allegations against staff

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. This is often a very difficult situation where there are autistic pupils who have little understanding of reality and use emotive phrases learnt from film and television programmes in inappropriate contexts. All such allegations must be reported to the CPLO who will take appropriate investigative action and act accordingly; however, if this becomes a feature of the language of a particular pupil, it will be discussed with parents and social worker and the recording of such language may be kept with the child's general records rather than in an individual child protection file.

- If the allegation made leads to concerns, the CPLO will immediately inform the Chair of Governors and the LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) will be consulted.
- If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher will take on the CPLO role and immediately inform the Chair of Governors and the LADO.

Whistleblowing

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues. (See Whistleblowing Policy)

Physical Intervention

- Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in a separate policy (Physical Intervention Policy) and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort and that all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.
- Where physical intervention is necessary to respond to physically challenging behaviours, staff trained in Positive Options must carry out interventions.
- Occasionally, in cases of children or young people who 'get stuck' in transition, may need physical prompting in order to get to where the curriculum is delivered. If this is the case, discussions will take place with parents and social workers and a risk assessment will be approved and signed.

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate policy (Anti-bullying policy)

Prevention

One of the acknowledged barriers to disclosure in our school population is the difficulties our students experience with communication. The school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our students by providing pupils with a curriculum which focuses on communication as a priority and encourages pupils to be able to express their thoughts, opinions and feelings in an environment where they feel secure.

Our PSHCE curriculum includes modules on staying safe and expressing worries to adults.

All staff working at the school have read and signed a Code of Conduct in line with this policy and this highlights good practice by staff in safeguarding children and young people.

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Appendix 1 - Recognition and Action

It is the duty of all staff to safeguard children and prevent abuse. This includes reporting any abuse or neglect witnessed, discovered or suspected, or any allegation you are told about.

Kinds of abuse

- **Physical:** Where children receive physical hurt or injury which is not accidental.
- **Sexual:** Where adults seek any degree of sexual gratification by using children, whether or not any physical contact is involved. This also applies where older or more powerful children exploit younger or weaker children.
- **Emotional:** Where children are severely affected by a rejection, lack of love and affection, or threats, taunting, etc.
- **Neglect:** Where lack of care and attention, or exposure to danger, places children at serious risk of harm, resulting in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Possible indications of physical abuse

- Injuries which are not consistent with explanations or are repeated
- Changes in a child's behaviour
- Frequent or delayed attendance at surgery or clinic, or an unusually aggressive response to any enquiry about injury
- Loss of weight, cringing from other children or adults
- Burns, scars, finger tip or implement-shaped bruises, bites etc.
- Black eyes without the graze marks which arise from genuine falls.

Possible indications of sexual abuse

- Repeated urinary infections, or infections in the genital area
- Precocious sex play, talk or behaviour

It should be understood that there may be innocent explanations for most of the above and that the child or young person's autism may be a factor. However, this is not a reason to delay or neglect to report.

What to do if you are told about or witness or suspect abuse

- Do not delay
- Consult immediately (within one hour) with the person available from the following:

- Headteacher (CPLO)
 - Deputy Headteacher
 - Any member of the senior management team
 - If the person you are seeking is busy, ask the office to inform them that there is an urgent child protection issue to report
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- If any of the above persons is the person you suspect, or if there is any other reason why it is difficult to speak to that person (he or she is married to or in a relationship with the person you suspect) then you should consult with the next person on the list.
 - Except where it is immediately necessary to prevent abuse actually taking place, you should not confront the suspected person, as this could prejudice any police enquiry
 - Any allegations, serious concerns, or information about child abuse must be referred to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board by the Head or Deputy Headteacher and confirmed in writing to Children's Services within 24 hours. An acknowledgement in writing will be requested. The CPLO must be kept informed at all times.
 - If you are not satisfied that a serious and definite concern has been properly referred to Surrey Safeguarding Children Board, contact the Local Education Office - 01483 518106.