

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone.

Athelstan House School recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts of 1989 and 2012 and the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors, and they are available to parents and carers. Through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children are listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training
- All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering from abuse, you should tell one of the designated persons for child protection or, in their absence, a senior member of staff.
- The designated persons for child protection are:
  - Jill Collins – overall responsibility for whole school, supported by
  - Jacqui Gillings – Early Years Foundation Stage
- In an emergency contact Single Point of Access (SPA) 020 8891 7969 during office hours or 020 8744 2442 out of hours or telephone 999.

### **This policy is divided into the following sections:**

- Recognising possible signs of abuse
- What to do with your concerns
- Allegations made against staff
- Preventative measures and use of mobile phones and cameras
- Allegations
- Whistle blowing
- Safe recruitment
- Training
- Guidance and information

### **Recognising possible signs of abuse**

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

**Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this used to be called Munchhausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more commonly referred to as fabricated illness.

**Emotional abuse** happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if

a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:**

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently be absent or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- become disinterested in play activities
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They will be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the Designated Safeguarding Person to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

**What to do with your concerns**

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or young person, it is important that you:

- listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;

- let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;
- inform Designated Safeguarding Person as soon as possible;
- make a written record of the incident or events in the child protection book using the exact words spoken

It is important to share your concerns with the designated person even if you are not sure if there is a child protection issue. If there is reason to believe that a child is being abused, or if advice about how to proceed is required, the designated officer (Jill Collins) or in her absence, a senior member of staff, will telephone the Single Point of Access Team (SPA) on 020 8891 7969 or 020 8744 2442 out of hours.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team.

### **Allegations made against staff**

#### **Preventative measures and use of mobile phones and cameras**

It is prohibited for any staff to use their mobile phones to take pictures of the children at school. Mobile phones will be stored in the school office or downstairs cupboard during the school opening hours. Only the school's equipment will be used to photograph the children and parents' consent obtained for photographs to be taken or published.

All staff will be informed of the School's code of conduct, and will sign to say they agree to adhere to these conditions.

Staff will not:

- use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking, hitting or rough handling
- behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child
- use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- engage in rough or physical games, including tickling or horseplay
- let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Any staff known to be breaking these conditions will be given a formal warning and disciplinary action will follow.

Nappy changing will be done in accordance with the nappy changing policy in an open environment.

### **Allegations**

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has a very specific set of guidelines to deal with allegations made against members of staff, including the Head. A copy of the Guidelines on Practice and Procedures Regarding Education Staff and Child Protection is held in the Child Protection File in the school office.

OfSTED must be informed of the allegation being made as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

An allegation of child abuse against a member of staff may come from a parent, another member of staff or from a child's disclosure. The school will:

- report such allegations in the same way as any other child protection issue
- record details that give cause for concern

- contact spa for advice and further guidance, who will contact the local authority designated officer (LADO)
- inform the designated officer or, if not appropriate, report directly to spa or Ofsted
- instigate the disciplinary procedure, due to the serious nature of the concerns, and suspend the member of staff until a full investigation has taken place
- take no further disciplinary action will be taken until the outcome of the investigation is known
- cooperate fully with social care and police investigations
- the staff will cooperate fully with the process
- ensure, if it appears that the results of the investigation that the allegations are justified, that disciplinary action will follow
- inform Ofsted throughout the investigation. telephone 0300 123 1231

### **Whistle blowing**

Any individual who has reasonable suspicion of malpractice should inform the Head or designated person for child protection immediately. If they do not feel this is the appropriate person they should approach Ofsted, SPA or Early Years Consultant (EYC) in the Local Authority.

All reports will be investigated and dealt with in confidence, including only those staff on a 'need to know' basis.

Whistle blowing at Ofsted Hotline: To contact the hotline call 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00), email [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk) or write to WBHL, Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, Piccadilly Gate, Manchester M1 2WD.

Free confidential advice can be obtained from 'Public Concern at Work' on 020 7404 6609, email [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk) or [www.pcaw.co.uk/law/uklegislation.htm](http://www.pcaw.co.uk/law/uklegislation.htm)

All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to the designated safeguarding person or Head. Complaints about the designated safeguarding person or Head should be reported to SPA.

### **Safer recruitment**

We practice robust recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children including enhanced DBS checks and references. We follow guidance from the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- complete an application form
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- be checked through the Disclosure and Baring Service as appropriate to their role
- be interviewed

New members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the setting's safeguarding and child protection policy and identification of their own safeguarding and child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have read and understood the child protection policy.

## Training

All staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and is part of their induction process. The Designated Safeguarding Person ensures that the staff's knowledge, understanding and practice of safeguarding children are current and up-to-date at all times. The Designated Safeguarding Person receives updated training at least every three years, including training in inter-agency procedures and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to support for their roles.

## Guidance and Information

The London Safeguarding Children Board  
Working Together to Safeguard Children  
A guide to inter-agency working to  
safeguard and promote the welfare of  
children.

[www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures)  
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/>  
search using ref: DCSF-00305-2010

Richmond Local Safeguarding Children  
Board

[www.richmond.gov.uk/lscb](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/lscb)

Keeping children safe

[www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

NSPCC

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Information on safe recruitment via

[http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS/Welfare\\_requirements/Suitable\\_people/Ensuring\\_suitability/Safe\\_recruitment/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS/Welfare_requirements/Suitable_people/Ensuring_suitability/Safe_recruitment/)