

Child protection policy

Robinsfield Infant School

Robinsfield Infant School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

The designated teacher for Child Protection is the **Headteacher Mrs Tanya O'Connor** and in her absence the **Deputy Headteacher Miss Jessica Bailey**. Should both these members of staff be absent the matter should then be referred to another member of the senior management team.

The NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION

is:

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

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing 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.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.

- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. 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 which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.

Procedures

1. Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to Child Protection (it should be made clear to pupils that **CONFIDENTIALITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES**) should immediately discuss it with the designated Child Protection teacher. Allegations of child abuse must always be given the highest priority and referred.
2. The designated teacher will then decide on an appropriate course of action
3. **Allegations against school staff.** Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one to one basis with pupils 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 **HEADTEACHER** so that ACPC and DFEE circular 10/95 procedures can be followed. If the allegation is against the Headteacher it

should be taken directly to the Deputy Headteacher and through her to the Chair of Governors.

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support the child:

- stay calm and be available to listen
- listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying
- question normally without pressurising
- don't put words into the child's mouth but note the main points carefully
- keep a full record – date, time, what the child did, said, etc
- reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us
- inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on
- immediately inform the designated teacher

CONFIDENTIALITY

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Headteacher will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. However, 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 which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Safeguarding Children in Education Team or Social Care.

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 agreed practice for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made (unless it relates to Sexual Abuse).

Staff must keep the designated teacher informed of:

- poor attendance & 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 their 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 respect.

NB Any referral to Social Services by telephone must be confirmed with the specified written form and a copy kept on the confidential school file (another copy should be sent to Westminster's Education Officer, Access and Social Inclusion). A note must be made of the Duty Social Worker and the time at which the call is made..
If parents have not been informed about (or if they have agreed to) the referral being made this must be reported to Social Services.

Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences or the criminal/civil courts. Consequently records and reports should be:

- factual (no opinions)
- non-judgemental (no assumptions)
- clear
- accurate
- relevant

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

- To ensure that all staff know the Headteacher is responsible (and in her absence Deputy Headteacher) 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 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.

This policy was ratified on

and will be reviewed on **September 2008**

Signed by the Chair of Governors:

