



Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy

ECM: Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy & achieve

Aims and objectives

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at our school, in compliance with DCSF guidance, 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education'.

This policy aims to ensure that all staff in our school understand the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Its aims are:

- to raise awareness amongst staff and for them to understand their responsibility for reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- to lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection;
- to work in partnership with statutory agencies.

All who are involved in and are responsible for the care of children are required to be specifically vigilant in order to ensure, wherever possible, the prompt detection of any form of abuse - physical, emotional or sexual.

At South Lee we recognise that the protection of children requires a close working relationship between all of the agencies involved in the protection of young people (eg police, NSPCC, social services, local Safeguarding Children Board, community health workers, doctors, etc.). In recent years, action has been taken to improve communication between such bodies and our aim is always to act in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

When dealing with allegations and suspicions of abuse, there is an obvious need to act quickly and decisively, particularly in cases where there is reasonable cause for suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk.

Staff should be aware that information required by the authorities in cases of suspected child abuse will require searching questions, by a qualified person, regarding the child's background and details of the alleged abuse. Staff should follow the procedure as set out in this policy.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to investigate where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is, or is likely to be, in danger. Effective child protection often depends on the skills, knowledge and judgement of all staff working with children. All children have access to a payphone, via the office. If necessary, they are allowed to borrow money from the office to make a call.

The school has two designated members of staff (**Mrs Donna Macfarlane and Mr Derek Whipp**) and a Governor (**Mrs Amanda Brown**) who have special responsibility for Child Protection.

A. Code of Practice

The Board of South Lee School expects that all staff will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

1. It is not good practice for staff to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
2. Staff should not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
3. It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the correct procedure for reporting such concerns.
4. Staff should remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
5. Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

B. Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Officer(s) (DCPO)

Both members of staff and the Governor are aware of the need to update training regularly (every two years for CPOs and three years for other staff).

The role of the designated person(s) is to:

1. know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection concern;
2. provide information and advice on child protection to the Board;
3. ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, to the appropriate agency, under confidential cover;
4. liaise with local social services and other agencies, as appropriate;
5. keep the Board informed about any action taken and any further action required;
6. ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence;
7. advise the Board of child protection training needs.

Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately to either of the DCPO, who will consult with the Designated Child Protection Governor before confirming what action has been taken, in writing, within 24 hours. Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these should be reported to the DCPO, at the earliest opportunity, who should then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

At Nursery level any concerns from staff should be reported in the first instance to Mrs Julie Last (Nursery manager).

The DCPO will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the NSPCC and/or social services), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

C. Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

* More detailed guidance on definitions of abuse can be found at www.suffolksbc.org.uk (Suffolk Safeguarding children Board)

D. Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
4. Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.

5. Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
7. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
9. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
10. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.

E. Procedure to follow in the event of a member of staff suspecting or identifying child abuse:

1. Should any member of staff:
 - suspect child abuse is occurring
 - suspect child abuse has occurred (involving a past or present pupil)
 - identify child abuse
 - receive a report of child abuse

he/she must report their findings/suspicions, at the earliest opportunity, to the DCPOs:

(Mrs Donna Macfarlane and Mr Derek Whipp. Mrs Macfarlane is also the first point of contact for Early Years.)

2. Detailed notes should be made (and filed) by all adults involved when the first allegations are made as these may be required at a later stage by the authorities, e.g. the police.
3. In the event of serious allegations the Headteacher or Deputy Head will immediately contact the necessary authorities (Social Services and Area Child Protection Committee).
4. The Headteacher or Deputy Head will make arrangements to support the child and to inform the parents (unless doing so might jeopardise the safety of the child).

In dealing with pupils, all staff should be aware that under the terms of 'The Children Act' all complaints are liable to be investigated - even if they are suspected of being false allegations.

F. Allegations involving School staff

If a child or parent makes a complaint about a member of staff, the person receiving the information must take it seriously and immediately inform one of the CPOs.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a pupil may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform one of the CPOs. He/She must make a record of their concerns, including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation. If the concerns are about the Headteacher, the Child Protection Governor (CPG) must be contacted.

A report should be passed to the ISA on any member of staff found to be unsuitable to work with children.

G. Intimate handling e.g. changing nappies/soiled underwear

It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position.

These principles can be put into practice in the following ways:

- *Allow the child, wherever possible, to express a preference regarding / to choose his/her carer and encourage them to say if they find a carer to be unacceptable.*
- *Allow the child a choice in the sequence of care.*
- *Ensure privacy appropriate to the child's age and the situation.*
- *Allow the child to care for him/herself as far as possible.*
- *Be aware of and responsive to the child's reactions.*
- *When carrying out intimate care away from the school, remember the main issues of privacy and safety.*

H. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for staff in the context of child protection have been adopted and include the following.

1. A clear definition of any role so that the most suitable appointee can be identified.
2. Identification of key selection criteria.
3. A wide circulation of vacancies to ensure equal opportunities.
4. Confirmation of the identity of the applicant including personal details obtained either through using an application form where appropriate, or through other means.
5. Requirement of an enhanced CRB check
6. Documentary evidence of qualifications.
7. Written references.

All who are involved in and are responsible for the care of children (including part-time and voluntary staff) are required to be specifically vigilant in order to ensure, wherever possible, the prompt detection of any form of abuse.

South Lee is a registered setting (Early Years) and is obliged to inform Ofsted (as soon as possible and certainly within 14 days) of any allegations of abuse by any persons looking after children, either on or outside of the school premises.

When dealing with allegations and suspicions of abuse, it is vital that one should keep an open mind when conducting enquiries.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to investigate where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is, or is likely to be, in danger. Effective child protection often depends on the skills, knowledge and judgement of all staff working with children. Should, in the event of an investigation, our procedures be found to be deficient in any area, we shall rectify the situation as soon as possible.

Contact details:

Children's Services Telephone Numbers:

Customer First No: 08456 023023

After 5.20pm and at weekends 01473 299669

Ofsted: 08456 404040

Suffolk Police Telephone Number:

Main Switchboard 01473 613500

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Western Area Office 01284 352000

Policy reviewed by the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

Reviewed 8.6.10