

## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**

The following procedure must be followed whenever abuse of a child is witnessed, disclosed or suspected.

### **(a) Types of Abuse and Recognition**

Abuse can take a number of forms:

- Physical: causing physical harm to a child by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or some other method. Physical harm can also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- Emotional: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child in a way likely to cause severe and persistent negative effects on the child's emotional development.
- Sexual: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse includes both physical contact and non-contact activities.
- Neglect: 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 and/or development.

Children living within care may also experience institutional abuse.

It is important to recognise the multitude of abusive situations that overlap within these definitions. Children may be at risk of abuse through such varied issues as bullying (including cyberbullying), substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, radicalisation and extremist behaviour, abuse related to protected characteristics e.g. racism/sexism/homophobia, domestic violence, gang violence, sexting and others.

It is also important to recognise that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. All staff must remain alert to the possibility of peer on peer abuse and take appropriate action to safeguard those involved, in line with this procedure.

Staff may become aware of abuse in a number of ways, including:

- Disclosure by a child
- Disclosure or remarks made by another party (e.g. carer, other professional, member of the public)
- Discovery of bruising or marks on a child's body
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Evidence of disturbance or explicit detail in drawing, writing or play
- Evidence of neglect in terms of cleanliness, personal hygiene, failure to thrive or apparent exposure to unnecessary risks
- Persistent lateness, poor or irregular attendance or persistent absence from school

## **(b) Reporting within Brantridge School**

### **1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within Brantridge School with responsibility for Child Protection is Dafydd Roberts, Interim Head.

The DSL has a responsibility to:

- Liaise with the LA, Social Services (Social Services), Police and other agencies on individual cases of suspected or identified child abuse – in West Sussex referrals should be made through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
  - Act as the contact person/s within the school (this may be delegated to other members of the Safeguarding Team with the approval and supervision of the Designated Safeguarding Lead)
  - Act as the first point of contact for any drug-related activity (please refer to the Substance Misuse Policy for further details)
  - Be responsible for co-ordinating action within the school on child protection issues
  - Liaise with staff on a 'need to know' basis so that children's rights to confidentiality are ensured
  - Oversee the planning of any curricular or other provision
  - Represent the school at child protection meetings and be a member of the 'core group' if required
  - Ensure staff are familiar with this Procedure and the overarching OHC&AT Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures, the LEA Guidelines and relevant government guidance
  - Raise awareness about child protection and arrange training for staff
  - Call multi-agency Best Interest meetings where appropriate.
2. Wherever a member of Brantridge School staff suspects abuse, or witnesses an incident that appears to be abuse, that member of staff must report it to the DSL as soon as possible for advice and guidance. In their absence they should inform a member of the school Safeguarding Team.
  3. A confidential report on the incident should be completed as soon as possible if alleged abuse has been witnessed or is suspected. This report must be handed to the DSL or, if they are not available, to a member of the school Safeguarding Team.
  4. The Head must be informed of all allegations or suspicions of abuse. This will be done by the DSL. Action set out in this policy **should not** be delayed until this is done.

## **(c) Listening to an Allegation of Abuse**

5. When listening to a disclosure, you should:

- (i) Remain calm, listen carefully and without judgement to everything that is said.
- (ii) Wait to seek help until after the disclosure has been made.
- (iii) Make accurate notes of the conversation.
- (iv) Avoid using leading questions. Open questions and phrases should be used as much as possible; for example ask 'What did you see?' and not 'Did you see...?'
- (v) Reassure the person making the disclosure that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- (vi) Let the person know that you need to tell someone else.
- (vii) Never promise to keep something a secret.

#### **(d) Contact with the Family**

6. Contact with the family should be discussed with the DSL, who may consult Social Services – either the designated Care Manager or the Duty Care Manager, the Education Welfare service or other relevant agencies. In West Sussex all referrals are made through MASH. If the child resides in another borough, the referral should be made to that borough.
7. In cases where a minor physical injury causes concern, it may be appropriate to discuss this with the parent or carer. If the explanation suggests a non-accidental cause for the injury (or a failure to protect the child from harm), the parent or carer will be informed that the matter must be referred to Social Services.
8. In cases of possible neglect or emotional abuse, the concern is likely to have built up over a period of time. There may have been discussion between Academy staff and the family about sources of help (e.g. Social Services), but if concerns persist, the DSL will need to refer to Social Services and will normally advise the family of this.
9. In cases where there are suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL will seek immediate advice from Social Services staff before discussing the matter with the family.

#### **(e) Recording and Reporting**

10. The person who has observed an incident must make an accurate report of it. This must be submitted to the DSL who will make any necessary additional notes.
11. The DSL (or a member of the Safeguarding Team at the request of the DSL) will complete the Academy's referral form or, in the case of an ongoing concern, add to the existing one.
12. All safeguarding emails sent outside of OHC&AT must be encrypted.
13. Social Services must be contacted about any allegations or suspicions of abuse. This will usually be done by the DSL.

14. In making contact with Social Services or the Police, the caller must note that the issue is one of suspected abuse or a suspected crime against a child.
15. Written statements and the Academy's referral form must be provided by the Academy to Social Services or, if appropriate, the Police, including the details of allegations/incidents observed. These must be provided as soon as possible, preferably on the same day. Copies must be provided to the DSL immediately.
16. The person reporting the incident (unless otherwise agreed by someone in the Safeguarding team, the DSL) will contact the individual's named care manager, or if they do not have one, the duty manager.
17. All records relating to child welfare concerns will be retained in a CP file held separately from the child's main file. CP files will be held in lockable storage accessible only to the Head and the DSL, and clearly marked as 'Confidential – for attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead'.
18. Information from records will only be used on a 'need to know' basis.
19. Relevant staff will need to know when a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, so they can monitor the child's welfare.
20. Records relating to the child's welfare will remain on the child's file as long as the child is a pupil at the Academy.
21. When the child leaves the Academy, other providers will be advised in writing that the Academy's records contain information about child protection concerns even where these are no longer current.
22. Safeguarding data reports must be provided to the OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team (ESLT) monthly and to governors termly.

**(f) Where a Criminal Offence is Suspected**

23. Wherever a criminal offence is alleged, or is suspected to have taken place, the police must be contacted. Brantridge School staff reporting to Social Services should clarify who will contact the police. If it is agreed that Social Services should contact the police, then the DSL will follow this up by making themselves known to the police and requesting confirmation as to whether the matter is being investigated.

**(g) Immediate Risk or Danger**

24. If an individual is at immediate risk, or in situations where there is forensic evidence, then the police and, if appropriate, other emergency services must be contacted immediately. In such cases the emergency services should be called before informing the DSL or a member of the Safeguarding team.

### **(h) Continued Provision of Support**

25. Brantridge School will stay closely involved and will check with the appropriate authorities that the allegation is being appropriately investigated.

### **(i) Allegations of Abuse against a Member of Brantridge School Staff**

26. Allegations or concerns about a member of staff, worker or volunteer must immediately be notified to the Head (or the Safeguarding Governor if the concern is about the Head) and the same principles of safeguarding applied.

27. The Head (or Safeguarding Governor) will always consult the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).

28. Following consultation, the Head (or Safeguarding Governor) will decide on appropriate action:

- Immediate referral to Social Services
- Consideration of disciplinary proceedings

29. It is important to bear in mind that although concern may relate to an individual pupil, other pupils may also be at risk.

30. The recommended procedures in Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures will be followed in such cases.

### **(j) Requests for Assistance by Other Agencies**

31. The Academy is required to assist local authority Social Services or the Police when they are making enquiries about the welfare of children.

32. Information about a child must therefore be shared on a 'need to know' basis with other agencies.

33. When telephone requests for information are received, always maintain security by checking the telephone number listing and calling back.

34. Always advise the DSL of any request for assistance from other agencies.

35. Requests for attendance at meetings about individual children (e.g. Child Protection conferences) should be notified to the DSL, who will arrange preparation of a report and attendance at the meeting.

36. Reports should contain information about the child's:

- academic progress
- attendance
- behaviour
- relationships with children and adults
- family
- any other relevant matter

37. Reports should be objective and distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
38. Unless you specify otherwise, reports will normally be made available to the child's family.

**(k) Pupils subject to a Child Protection Plan**

39. The Academy will be told by the relevant Social Services when a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan (previously the CPR).
40. The name of the key care manager must be clearly recorded on the child's record.
41. The Academy will participate fully in the work of the core group, to assist with the objectives of the Child Protection Plan.
42. When a child is on a Child Protection Plan, the Academy will report all absences, behavioural changes or other concerns to the key social worker.
43. When a child on a Child Protection Plan leaves the Academy, all the child protection information should be transferred to the new provision.

**(l) Confidentiality**

44. The person to whom the disclosure has been made must keep the disclosure confidential. They must discuss with the persons named above but they should not discuss it with other colleagues.

**Other resources:**

*Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium, 2015)*

<http://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Oct%202015.pdf>

*Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016)*

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550511/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf)