

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **(2017)**

***'Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children during school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.'***

*(Working Together under the Children Act 2004)*

Keeping Learners Safe – Welsh Government Circular 158/2015 states:

***'Everyone who works in education should share the same goals to keep children and young people safe'***. We do this by:

- Creating and keeping safe places to learn
- Identifying where there are welfare concerns and taking the right action
- Helping children and young people to be aware and understand how to stay safe

We reach these goals by:

- Stopping unsuitable people working with children and young people
- Having safer practice in place
- Challenging poor or unsafe practice
- Identifying when there's an issue or concern about a child's welfare and taking actions
- Working together with other services

Welsh Government safeguard children and young people by making sure they follow requirements of:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)
- Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 – these include 4 key articles relevant to children and education (Article 12/19/28/29)
- The Rights of Children & Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

## **1.PURPOSE OF A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

1.1. An effective whole-school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about their duties and responsibilities in dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

1.2 Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

There are three main elements to our child protection policy:

- a) Prevention (eg positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral, support to pupils).
- b) Protection (by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns).
- c) Support (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school and Governors. Learning Support Assistants, mid-day supervisors, caretakers, secretaries as well as teachers can be the first point of

disclosure for a child.

## **2. SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

2.1. We recognise that, for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult can help with the prevention and identification of child abuse.

Our school will therefore:

- a) Establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- b) Ensure that pupils know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE, which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. Further information about these activities and opportunities can be obtained from the school's PSHE coordinators.
- d) Include in the curriculum material, which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills. Further information about this material can be obtained from the school's PSHE coordinators.
- e) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

## **3. FRAMEWORK**

3.1. Schools do not operate in isolation. Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board.

## **4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. There are, however, key people within schools and the Education Services who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. These responsibilities are also outlined in 'Keeping Learners Safe' (Circular 158/2015). The Head Teacher or in her absence the Deputy Head Teacher or Designated Senior Person (previously known as the Child Protection Coordinator) have this responsibility within schools.

The designated senior persons with responsibility for Child Protection are:

**Mr Dave Humphreys (Deputy Head) Mrs Bronwen McKibben (Learning Manager)**

4.2. It is the role of the designated teacher to ensure that local child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make relevant referrals to the named agencies according to the guidance given. Additionally, it is their role to ensure all staff employed within the school is aware of the schools internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.

It is the role of the Head Teacher to make sure that Child Protection Policies are in place, that there are enough resources and time for the Designated Senior Persons, and that all staff and volunteers understand what to do and feel able to raise concerns.

4.3. The roles and responsibilities of the named Governor responsible for child protection, who is **Mrs Sue Coleman**, are to ensure that the school has an effective policy, that child protection procedures are complied with, and to support the school in this aspect. It is important that Governors are not given details relating to specific child protection situations to ensure

confidentiality is not breached.

Each Governing Body has a duty to ensure that the school has a Child Protection Policy and procedures in place that are looked at every year; these are available to parents and carers if they ask; are available in a youth friendly version that pupils can understand; have steps in place to deal with reports against members of staff; support new staff.

4.4. The Education Services Designated Safeguarding Lead provides advice, support, and arranges the training to the school and to the schools named person. They can also make referrals to the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board and can raise concerns about procedures on behalf of the school.

## **5. PROCEDURES**

5.1. We will:

- Follow the procedures set out in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the within the Child Protection Procedures produced for all Education Services in April 2010 in leaflet form.
- Adhere to the procedures set out in the Welsh Government circular 002/2013: 'Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff'.
- Ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are made in accordance with Welsh Government guidance, 'Keeping Learners Safe' Circular 158/2015.
- Ensure that all staff are kept informed about child protection procedures, through induction, briefings and awareness training – and staff are to be kept informed regularly who the nominated person is and his/her Deputy in his/her absence.
- Pay due regard to 'The Prevent Duty Guidance' for England & Wales – the duty in The Counter Terrorism & Security Act, 2015.
- There needs to be a face to face interview on induction for new staff, outlining safeguarding procedures and responsibilities, and these interviews should be recorded and filed appropriately.
- Other adults visiting the school (e.g. peripatetic teachers, learning support staff) will be advised of the school's policy and the named person to whom they should raise any concerns with.
- A statement in the school brochure will inform parents and carers about our school's duties and responsibilities under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (from new publication in 2015).
- Notify the local Social Service team if:
  - A pupil on the Child Protection Register is excluded either for a fixed term or permanently
  - If there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the Child Protection Register for more than two days from the school (or one day following a weekend).
  - When a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves we will transfer information to the new school immediately and inform Children & Family & Safeguarding Service.

## **6. TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

6.1. Our school will ensure that the Key Child protection staff and the Nominated Governor for child protection attend training relevant to their role. All staff will undertake awareness raising training during their induction (this should be recorded and put on file) into the school and periodically to refresh and update their knowledge and understanding. Support will be available for staff from the Head Teacher in the first instance, and from other members of the school's management team where there are concerns or queries about child protection. School staff should know their personal responsibilities, and agreed local procedures, be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse, and know how

to support a child who discloses abuse.

## **7. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

7.1. Confidentiality is an issue, which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with the pupil to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the named person and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities. This would lead to a breakdown in trust of adults by the pupil and could potentially compromise their wellbeing and safety. **Mr Dave Humphreys or Mrs Bronwen McKibben** will invoke the local agreed guidelines and procedures, where there is a cause for concern. Staff will be informed of relevant aspects in respect of child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

## **8. RECORDS AND MONITORING**

8.1. Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. A file note will be made of the concern raised and action taken. These file notes are kept in a confidential file, in the Head Teacher's PA's office. In the same way notes must be kept of any pupil who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

## **9. ATTENDANCE AT CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES**

The Head Teacher or one of the CP officers would attend a child protection conference called in respect of a pupil. He/she may be accompanied by other relevant staff (eg Learning Manager or Mentor) if this is of benefit to the pupil. Staff attending such conferences will be offered support and access to appropriate counselling if they wish to receive this.

## **10. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK**

10.1. Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant. It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

10.2. This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- a) The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- b) The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- c) The implementation of school behaviour management policies (required under the Code of Practice, 2002 Education Act – currently under revision).
- d) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behavior from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the pupils and their families.
- f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interests to do so.
- g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to

respond appropriately in child protection situations.

10.3 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school. These are, the policy on sex and relationships education, the policy/guidelines for privacy and dignity of our pupils, the policy for management of pupils' behaviour, the health and safety policy, alcohol and substance misuse policy, anti-bullying policy, and food & fitness policy/guidelines, and the duty on schools to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

10.4 We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

### **BULLYING**

Our Policy on bullying is set out in (a separate document/the school's Behaviour Policy) and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

### **PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

Our policy on physical intervention is set out (a separate document) and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

## **11. SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF**

- Many of our pupils would have difficulty in talking about these issues and most lack the vocabulary for this. Staff will need to be sensitive to the pupil's preferred style of communication and their individual special needs if we are to be able to provide a safe environment for our pupils. When engaging with pupils all staff must be aware of the potential for misinterpreting our pupils' efforts to raise a child protection concern or issue.
- Staff working in a one-to-one situation with a pupil should ensure that they are positioned so as to be visible and audible to other staff where there may be a possibility of misinterpretation of their interaction with a pupil.
- School staff are informed about counselling and / or giving advice to children / young people about sexual matters through the school Policy on Sex and Relationships Education.
- School staff are familiar with the Signs of Abuse (*Appendix 2*).
- School staff are aware of legislation such as the All Wales Protocol for the Management of Young People Engaged in Sexually Harmful Behaviour; the Child Sexual Exploitation Safeguarding Guidance from Welsh Government, and the HM Government – Prevent Duty Guidance: for England & Wales (guidance for specified authorities in England & Wales on the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015).
- School staff work hard to maintain effective partnerships with parents and carers, and they should be aware that this policy might affect this working relationship at a given time. However, we will maintain our commitment to working with parents and carers to the benefit of all pupils. Sensitive and supportive handling of these issues, whilst affirming that the pupils in our care are our first priority, will help maintain this working relationship.
- All staff are required to complete a Disclosure and Barring check, which has replaced the Police Records and CRB checks, prior to taking up their appointment, and to sign a declaration regarding convictions relating to the harm of children during their application process. Staff who deliberately seek to mislead the school in respect of this will be subject to dismissal.
- Where a member of staff is subject to an accusation of abuse, this will be fully investigated

under the school's Disciplinary Procedures and All Wales Child Protection Procedures Part 4. Advice should also be sought from a Senior Officer in Education Services and Conwy's Education Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any suspected or alleged abuse must be reported to Children & Family & Safeguarding Service or the Police.

**Please note:**

In the unlikely event that neither **Mr Dave Humphreys** or **Mrs Bronwen McKibben** are available, you may seek advice and guidance from **Ms Ffion Hughes**, our EWO or alternatively **Mrs Mair Herbert**, Acting Head Teacher or **Mrs Janet Champion**, Acting Deputy Head or any other senior staff.

If you are not able to locate any of the above, please phone Social Services on **01492 575111** and report the disclosure.

The out of hours number is **01492 515777**.

**Allegation against the Head Teacher**

If an allegation is against the Head Teacher, you must inform then the DSP's (Designated Senior Person now replaces the term Child Protection Co-ordinator), Mr Dave Humphreys or Mrs Bronwen McKibben who will inform the Chair of Governors, Mr Phil Capper.

Contact is also made with Mrs Noella Roberts or any other Senior Officer from Conwy. A referral will be made to Social Services via the usual route (CP referral).

**Signs of abuse**

This relates to both children and adults. They both have their individual codes of practice and relevant staff need to be familiar with these documents.

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but only serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too to remember that many children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents / carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not Social Services will always want to understand them in relation to the child's development and context.

**Children in Need**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those know to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and Welsh Government guidance *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004* as follows:

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexpected bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body

- Multiple bruises – in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

**NB:** Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, eg elbows, knees, shins, and often on the front of the body. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely eg cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- A fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, in hot weather
- Depression or withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger (ie living in a domestic abuse environment) or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour eg sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet) and through Child Sexual Exploitation.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains, discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour eg becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

### **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 that child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and / or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised