

## NETHER STOWEY SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

is **valued**

is **self-confident**

### A SAFE CHILD

has **self-esteem**

has the **skills** and  
**knowledge** for self-  
protection

#### A SAFE CHILD KNOWS

- "I have the right to be safe".
- "I have **rights** over my body".
- "It's OK to say 'no'".
- How to be assertive.

#### A SAFE CHILD UNDERSTANDS

- The difference between good and bad secrets.
- What might be a potentially dangerous situation.
- Who can help or be trusted.
- The difference between appropriate and inappropriate touches.

#### A SAFE CHILD IS ABLE TO

- Trust, recognise and express their **feelings**.
- Solve **problems**.
- Make **judgements**.
- Make **decisions**.
- Be **assertive**.

<b>PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM ABUSE: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL STAFF</b>
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### 1. Procedure for Dealing with Cases

Child abuse represents a failure by omission or commission, to respect the needs and rights of children.

Teachers and carers in school are well-placed to notice the signs of child abuse, which may be:

- physical abuse - bruises, lacerations and burns;
- physical neglect - inadequate clothing, poor growth and hunger;
- emotional abuse - excessive dependence or attention-seeking;
- sexual abuse - physical signs or substantial behaviour change (including precocity or withdrawal).

It is not our responsibility to investigate suspected abuse. We should take the following action.

If a child volunteers information, our chief task is to listen. It is rare for children to make false allegations about abuse. Therefore, it is important to take seriously what children say. Whoever the alleged abuser, whatever the setting, the failure to respond effectively to a child who has been abused can have serious consequences for the child.

We should not make assumptions nor ask leading questions. However, we should make a note of the information, including the time, the setting and those present, which should then be passed to the Headteacher (who at this school is the 'designated teacher').

The designated teacher has the responsibility for liaising with the Social Services Department and other agencies (police and NSPCC) over cases of abuse; and makes the decision whether to refer a case of suspected or alleged abuse to the investigating agencies.

The CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK is kept available for information in the Office, together with informative literature published by the NSPCC.

### 2. Handling Information

2.1 **Confidentiality.** Staff have a professional responsibility to share information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies. If a child confides in a member of staff, s/he must tell the child sensitively that this is so.

2.2 **Records and report writing.** Child protection records should include the date, the event and the action taken. Reports for case conferences should be objective and based on evidence; they should focus on the child's educational progress, attendance, motivation and participation. Records and reports must be kept in secure, locked locations.

2.3 **Information about children on the child protection register.**

The Social Services Department will inform the school when a child's name is placed on, or removed from, the C.P.R. The school will pass this information on immediately to the new school if a child transfers.

### 3. **Monitoring Abused Children**

The school should monitor any pupil whose name is on the child protection register, and be alert to any signs which suggest a deterioration in the home circumstances. We should alert the Social Services Department when a pupil is absent.

### 4. **Links With Other Issues**

4.1 **Parental Involvement.** Parents will be made aware of the school's child protection policy through the school prospectus. They will also be informed that this policy may require cases to be referred to the investigative agency as a constructive and helpful measure.

4.2 **Bullying.** Bullying can be physical (e.g. hitting, theft), verbal (e.g. name-calling) or indirect (e.g. exclusion from social groups). We will act promptly to combat bullying and will ensure that pupils know how to draw their concerns to our attention.

### 5. **Contribution of the Curriculum**

We can play a part in the prevention of child abuse through the teaching we offer, such as personal and social education. In considering the extent to which teaching should include more direct warnings about child abuse, and advice about how children may protect themselves, any gains in preventing abuse should be balanced against the risk of causing anxiety and undermining stable family relationships.

### 6. **Staff**

6.1 **Appointment of Staff.** It is a standard part of recruitment procedures to check the possible criminal background of people who have unsupervised access to children.

6.2 **Allegations Against Staff.** In the event of an allegation, procedures will be in accordance with the LEA's Guidance for Schools Volume 1 (Personnel) Section 16.6: 'Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure - Gross Misconduct.' However, prior to invoking this procedure, professional guidance pertinent to the circumstances would be sought from the LEA. Account would be taken both of the need for child protection and of the need to keep the damaging effects of false allegations to the minimum, considering: the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation; the risk of harm to the pupil(s); the possibility of tampering with evidence; the interests of the person concerned and of the school.

6.3 **Contact With Pupils.** It is unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that teachers should touch pupils only in an emergency. However, staff should bear in mind that perfectly innocent actions may be misconstrued. They should never touch pupils in ways or on parts of the body which may be considered indecent. That being said, teaching and non-teaching staff all have a caring role to play, acting *in loco parentis*, and there may be occasions when it is necessary, for example, to undress a

small child. Whilst it is not likely always to be practical directly to involve a second adult in such a task it is strongly advisable at least to inform someone of what is proposed to be done, as a safeguard to everyone's interests.

In the rare cases where a teacher has to use physical restraint, no more than the minimum necessary force should be used.