

SINGLETON C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nurturing Individuals to flourish and grow together, rooted by God's love.



Child Protection Policy (School Procedures)

Should be read alongside:

KCSiE: 2024

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (West Sussex Model policy)

Low Level Concerns Policy

Date: September 2024

Review September 2025

.....

Guiding Principles

- The welfare of the children is paramount.
- At all times there must be a multi-disciplinary and a multi-agency approach and commitment to the protection, support and safeguarding of children from harm.
- The right to confidentiality for parents, carers, teachers and children must be respected and information will only be shared in the interests of the child's welfare.

Policy Statement

Singleton CE Primary School has a primary responsibility for the care and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, and in which our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure that everyone who works in the school – teachers, non-teaching staff, governors and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action required when abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. To this end, the school will ensure that all staff, whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary are aware of child protection issues, and their role with regard to these. The overriding concern of all the people who come to work at Singleton is the care, welfare and safety of each child and this is paramount.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Team

Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.....Mrs T Smyth
Designated Governor for Child Protection.....Kathy Manouch
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.....Miss K Boyd
Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection..... Mrs K Radley

Definition of Child Abuse

Child is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others

Abusers

Those people who have been identified as abusers through the legal process suggest strongly that abusers tend to be known to the child (but not exclusively) and have regular access to children. Therefore, children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e. a person who has actual custody of a child, such as a foster parent or member of staff in a residential home), people who work in the caring professions, an acquaintance or stranger, who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of the parent or carer to act or to provide care, or both.

ABUSE MAY TAKE A NUMBER OF FORMS

Physical Injury

Actual or deliberate physical injury to a child, or willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Physical Indicators

- Multiple bruising or bizarre markings on the skin.
- Multiple bruising at different stages of resolution.
- Bruising and or lacerations around the mouth.
- Finger and thumb marks on the face or body.
- Black eyes (particularly when both are affected).
- Burns, scalds or bites which appear to have been caused by adults.
- Untreated injuries.

Behavioural Indicators

- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Chronic runaway.
- Aggressive or withdrawn.
- Fear of returning home.
- Reluctance to have physical contact.
- Clothing inappropriate to weather - worn to hide part of the body.

Neglect

The actual or likely persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Indicators

- Constant hunger.
- Poor state of clothing / personal hygiene.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Emaciation / distended stomach.
- Constant tiredness.

Behavioural Indicators

- Tiredness, listlessness.
- Lack of social relationships.
- Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging.
- Frequently absent or late.
- Low self-esteem.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely exploitation of a child. The involvement of children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Physical Indicators

- Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.
- Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections.
- Venereal diseases.

Behavioural Indicators

- Chronically depressed/suicidal.
 - Inappropriately seductive or precocious.
 - Sexually explicit language.
 - Low self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence.
 - Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark.
 - Outbursts of anger/hysteria.
 - Overly protective of siblings.
-

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical, and/or behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

Physical Indicators

- Sudden speech disorder.
- Signs of self-mutilation.
- Signs of solvent abuse (e.g. mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness).
- Wetting and/or soiling.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Poor peer relationships.

Behavioural Indicators

- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb-sucking).
- Reluctance for parent liaison.
- Fear of new situations.
- Chronic runaway.
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

Identification of Abuse

Because of our day-to-day contact with individual children, we as teachers – but also non-teaching staff, are particularly well placed to observe outward symptoms or changes in appearance, behaviour, learning pattern or development. Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes, including bereavement or other disruption in family circumstances. Sometimes, however, they may be due to child abuse.

Signs of abuse

The signs of abuse (*not an exhaustive list*) such as those described above can do no more than give rise to concern – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers and other school staff should be aware of the possible implications of, and be alert to, all such signs, particularly if they appear in combination or are regularly repeated. A child may make a comment which would indicate a child protection concern.

A child may make a disclosure of abuse. Where a member of staff is concerned that abuse may have occurred, he or she must report this immediately, following the school's guidelines on the identification and reporting of suspected abuse.

Child on Child abuse *A Specific Child Protection Issue*

All members of staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of child on child abuse occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to support the child who has abused.. Parents of all children will be contacted to put both a plan of safety and support plan in place.

Examples of Child on Child abuse include:

- bullying
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling,
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes,online sexual harassment
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: eg: touch themselves
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude, semi-nude images or videos
- upskirting
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Children absent from education *A specific Child Protection Issue*

These are children who are on our school roll but have poor attendance (either for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions) .

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

At Singleton we ensure that any absence is followed up by 9am if there has been no contact from families.

If there is no communication from the primary parent /carer, contact will be made with other identified contacts on the child's records.

Patterns of absence will be monitored by the classteacher and concerns shared with the DSL as soon as possible.

A meeting will be held with families to discuss any barrier / concerns as to why a child may have poor attendance and Early Help offered at this point.

If no improvement is made, IFD will be contacted and a request made for Early Help / enabling families.

Dealing With Disclosures of Abuse – The 5 Rs

A child may quite innocently disclose details of abuse that occurs within the family or other situations. It is vital that the member of staff in whom a child has chosen to confide is sympathetic and supportive. The member of staff should remain calm and reassuring. Children who have suffered abuse may have low self-esteem or may withdraw if they detect signs of doubt or revulsion.

1 RECEIVE

- Listen to the child, and do not to interrupt if he or she is freely recalling significant events.
- Never attempt to cross-examine the child or press for information.

2 REASSURE

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by talking to you.
- Do not promise to keep secret what the child has said. Explain that you will need to speak with one of the members of the Safeguarding team who will know what to do next and how to help them.

3 RESPOND

- Care must be taken in asking questions and interpreting children's responses.
- Do not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions. For example, staff should say, "Tell me what happened", rather than, "Did they do X to you?" (a leading question).

4 RECORD

A note of the discussion should be **made immediately** after it has taken place which should record on the school's **ORANGE reporting form**

- The information revealed by the child, quoting his or her words, where possible. Do not use other children's full names: only initials.
 - The date, time, place, to whom the suspicions were reported and any other persons present.
 - Any signs of physical injury observed should be described in detail, or sketched in a diagram, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed.
 - Date, sign and time the record: include any jottings you may have made on other paper when with the child.
-

5 REPORT

- Immediately pass a copy to the Designated Teacher, Theresa Smyth or, in her absence to the Deputy Designated Teachers Katie Radley or Kathryn Boyd.
- **In the event of no DSL being in school, the most senior member of staff, should contact the IFD to talk through the disclosure and seek advice of next steps. 01403 229900**
- No attempt should be made to discuss concerns or fears with the parents or indeed with anyone who is not involved with the care of the child, other than the DSL.
- Staff should also be aware that their note of the discussion may need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.
- When reporting to the IFD either using the online form or phone call, careful records should be kept, with time/dates. This is to ensure that response times from CSS are also recorded. Any email communication either to or from IFD should be printed and placed into the child's file.

Remember it is the role of the school to REPORT not INVESTIGATE

Confidentiality

- No promise of secrecy can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.
 - Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
 - Sensitive information about children and parents is confidential and should not be made the subject of general conversation outside the school, other than with statutory officials.
 - All staff should recognise, therefore, that in order to protect children from harm, confidentiality must be subordinated to the need to take appropriate action, by involving others in the child's best interest.
-

REFERRAL AND THE ROLE OF THE DSL

In all cases where abuse is suspected, or where an allegation has been made by a pupil that abuse has taken place, or where serious concerns exist about the welfare of the child, members of staff should report verbally and in written format the information to the Designated Teacher.

The DSL should refer cases which meet threshold to The Integrated Front Door, using the online referral system. Where a case requires an urgent / time sensitive response, a phone call should be made.

Where there are concerns for a child's safety at the end of the day, the child should be removed to a 'safe' place and communication made with the family by the Head / SLT. IFD should be made aware immediately of the situation. If there are other siblings in other settings, it is vital that this information is shared urgently.

[Click here for Threshold Guidance](#) to support decisions when referring to IFD.

It is vital that the DSL communicates the decision taken with the adult who has reported the disclosure.

Although details of outcome may not be shared, the next steps and rationale should be communicated. In the event that a staff member feels that the actions are not satisfactory, they should speak with the other DSLs.

If a concern remains, the member of staff should contact IFD themselves to discuss the case and/or speak to the Safeguarding Governor: Kathryn Manouch

It is the role of the DSL to ensure that all referrals made to IFD are responded to within 48 hours. Where the DSL feels that the referral has not had a satisfactory outcome, this should be escalated in the first instance to the Social Worker's Line Manager.

Advice can also be sought from the Safeguarding In Education Team: 03302 224030

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL THOSE WORKING AT SINGLETON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and their behaviour towards children in their charge must be above reproach. The Code of Conduct is not intended to discourage positive interaction between staff and pupils but to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of Child Abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on appropriate conduct.

Private meetings with pupils

When confidential interviews are taking place, staff should:

- Conduct such interviews in a room with a visual panel, or with the door open, and not use a sign prohibiting entry to an interview room
- Where possible have another pupil, or preferably another adult, nearby during the interview.

Physical contact with pupils

- It is important that everyone is aware of the risks they face if they use corporal punishment to discipline pupils, or if they touch children other than to comfort the youngest of them or to deal with injuries or accidents.
- As a general principle staff are advised not to make **unnecessary physical contact with pupils**. It is accepted that children who are injured, upset or require support to regulate may need some physical interaction. (high five, shoulder to shoulder hug) It is important to ensure this is appropriate / consensual.

Where a child requires a change of clothing which requires a level of intimate care:

- Tell another member of staff that they are changing the child.
 - Change the child in a reasonably open space (disabled toilet with door open)
 - Be gentle with the child, and encourage them to wipe / clean independently
 - Try not to make the child feel bad about what is happening.
 - Respect the child's dignity at all times.
 - Contact parents if the child becomes distressed about changing.
-

Principles for staff conduct

- Where possible, staff should avoid one-to-one contact with children in the following areas: toilets, classrooms, cars/minibuses or after school.
- Staff should never invite pupils to their homes.
- Staff must not under any circumstances use corporal punishment, such as hitting. If there is a problem of serious misbehaviour and the member of staff cannot deal with the situation they should bring the pupil(s) to another staff member.
- If, in an emergency, staff have to administer first aid, they should ensure where possible that other children or another adult are present, if staff have any doubts as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances could be misunderstood.
- No member of staff should hesitate to provide first aid in an emergency because another person is not present.
- Staff must never make sexually suggestive comments to or about a child, even in jest.
- Staff must never keep suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a colleague to themselves. If there is an attempted cover-up, staff should be aware that they could be implicated.
- Any report of alleged bullying of a pupil must be passed to the DSL

CONCERNS ABOUT STAFF CONDUCT

ANY CONCERNS ABOUT Staff Conduct should be reported to the Headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher this should be reported to the Chair of Governors who will seek advice from the LADO.

It is important that any Low Level concerns are logged (see Policy) and reviewed by the Headteacher. The documentation should remain in the staff members personnel file.

Any serious allegations should be recorded and followed up immediately by either the Head (or Chair of Governors if about the Head) with the LADO:

LADO@westsussex.gov.uk or phone: 0330 222 6450

Supply Staff and Volunteers

All must be made aware of this policy, and expectations of staff conduct. Prior to any supply teacher / volunteer / new staff member starting, it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to organize an induction which should include a guide to safeguarding at our school.

Vetting Procedures

The school arranges vetting of all staff and volunteers. The DBS clearance is required by all staff and volunteers.

Visitors are not left unsupervised in the company of pupils. These procedures are to ensure that those people who work in, or become part of the school community at any time, do not represent a threat to the health and well- being of our pupils.

Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Low-Level Concern

Does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the adult's behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with an organisation's staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegation threshold, or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO - but may merit consulting with and seeking advice from the LADO, and on a no-names basis if necessary.

Appropriate Conduct

Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation's staff code of conduct, and the law.

.....

Parents / Carers: What to do if you have a concern about your own / another child's welfare

Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Smyth or in her absence: Mrs Radley or Miss Boyd

Refer your concerns to Children Social Services: 01403 229900

Contact the NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 (Monday - Friday 11-5pm)

If you believe is in immediate danger: call the police: 999

The school will always encourage and ask you to refer any concerns you have directly if it is about another pupil / family.

Remember this may be part of a situation that we are already aware of. We will record your concerns regarding the child and take our own action.

While it may be necessary to share concerns and complaints, we will proceed in a confidential manner and only those who need to know will be informed. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have a concern or complaint. We **all** have a **duty of care** to protect children, and their welfare must always be our priority.