



Firs School Safeguarding Policy

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DISTRIBUTION

Please note that 2 copies of this document are printed as standard and distributed to the following areas.

- 1) The Staff Room
- 2) The Top Floor Study Room

If you would like a personal copy of the handbook please ask the school office and a personal copy can be printed or an electronic copy can be e-mailed to you. You will then be automatically sent an electronic copy every time an update occurs.

The electronic version of this document is available on the school server in the location identified above. (The Y drive is "Company Documents")

PUBLICATION HISTORY

01/Dec/2009

Issue 01.01, Initial publication of the policy on the web site following training course attended by head and CPO.

26/Jan/2010

Issue 02.01, Further update incorporating elements from the old child protection policy formerly in the employee handbook.

11/Feb/2010

Issue 02.02, Updated for final approval before annual report.

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1. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Firs School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect all children and support all pupils in the school. The following policy complies with DCSF guidelines: Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. We will follow the procedures set out by Cheshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board. We are committed to ensuring that all learning activities provide a safe, enjoyable and positive experience for children and young people.

The policy applies to all staff (teaching, administrative and support), directors, peripatetic teachers and volunteers working in the Firs School. All provisions of this policy apply to the EYFS.

We recognise that all children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The following outcomes, highlighted in "Every Child Matters", are endorsed by The Firs School.

- stay safe
- be healthy
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

1.1. AIMS

- To ensure we practise safe recruitment by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- To raise awareness of child protection issues
- To ensure that children are fully informed and educated, equipping them with the skills needed to keep them safe
- To include in the curriculum discrete activities and opportunities for pupils to acquire skills and attitudes both to resist abuse in their own homes and to prepare themselves for responsibilities, including parenthood, in their adult lives
- To develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- To support pupils in accordance with their Child Protection Plan if required
- To establish a safe environment in which children can grow in confidence, learn and develop in all areas
- To maintain links with local agencies in order to ensure compliance with procedure and to sustain co-operation with organisations such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board

"It is important to make children and young people aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe." Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007

1.2. TYPES OF ABUSE

The school recognises the importance of positive staff/pupil relationships and that day-to-day contact with children means that staff are often well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

For the purposes of this policy abuse can be categorised into four main forms

1. Physical abuse
2. Neglect
3. Emotional Abuse
4. Sexual abuse

1.2.1 ABUSE INDICATORS

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

- Unexplained injuries
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour
- Deterioration of work
- Patterns of absence

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

- Self harm
- Stealing/scrounging
- Don't care attitude
- Social isolation
- Attention seeking
- Depression/withdrawal

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT:

- Constant hunger
- Parents going away
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non attendance
- Untreated medical problems

- Low self esteem
- Stealing/scrounging

POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE:

- Bruises, scratches or unexplained marks
- Pregnancy
- Inappropriate sexual awareness for their age
- Attempts to “teach” others about sexual activity
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety and tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends

1.3. WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

If any member of staff has a concern that a child in the school is suffering abuse of any kind they must inform the Child Protection Officer (CPO). All concerns must be written, signed and dated as well as spoken.

If there is a concern that a member of staff is abusing a child then both the CPO and the Head Teacher must be informed immediately. The procedure for following up an allegation of abuse by staff is in this document.

In either case the concerns must NOT be discussed with any other member of staff. All matters relating to Child Protection issues must be dealt with in strictest confidence. Staff members will only be informed on a “need to know” basis.

1.4. SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO A CHILD’S DISCLOSURE

1. The member of staff to whom the disclosure has been made must remain calm, show a reassuring attitude and use open and appropriate body language.
2. The child’s feelings should be accepted.
3. The member of staff must not promise confidentiality but must make it understood that he/she may have to tell someone in order to help the child.
4. The member of staff must write down everything the child has said as soon as possible to ensure details are not forgotten and as much as possible using the child’s own words. If necessary a body chart must be made out to show where and what type of injury has occurred.
5. Depending on the injury, the CPO or the Head Teacher will speak to the parents about the disclosure. However, if the injuries are of a sexual nature then the CPO will seek advice from Social Services.
6. If, after speaking to the parents or carer, (noting their reaction and explanation) the CPO or the Head Teacher is still concerned that the child is vulnerable to abuse, and/or may be being abused, Social Services should be contacted immediately.
7. If the CPO or the Head Teacher is at that time happy with the parents’ or carer’s explanation regarding the disclosure, she must inform the parent that the

report made of the disclosure will be kept in school in a separate and confidential file. The parent can be given a photocopy of the disclosure but the original must be kept in the event of it being needed at a future date.

8. If the child's disclosure suggests abuse by a member of staff (including the Head Teacher or the CPO) then the procedure as set out in section 0 below will be followed. (Note this is a separate procedure as to the normal disciplinary procedure in the school handbook).

1.5. MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Consequently we will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where all children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in school that they can approach with any concerns they have
- Include opportunities in the PSHE programme for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse
- Ensure that assemblies and our pastoral system provide opportunities to raise awareness and understanding
- Maintain appropriate training for staff to ensure that they are well informed, fully aware of the correct Child Protection procedures and understand the importance of adhering to a professional code of conduct.

1.6. SCHOOL ACTIONS

We will ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and that all staff, parents and Directors are aware of their responsibilities and know the designated senior person for Child Protection.

We will therefore:-

- Ensure that we have a designated Senior person for Child Protection (CPO) who has received appropriate training and support
- The designated person is Mrs Pauline Williams. The Head Teacher, Mrs Margaret Denton, is the supporting officer. We intend to appoint a practitioner from the EYFS to take lead responsibility in the next year.
- All staff will have the required training (updated every 3 years). CPO teachers will have training at 2 yearly intervals
- When they are first appointed, the CPO(s) should receive training in child protection and inter-agency procedures that enables them to work in partnership with other agencies. There should be refresher training every two years to keep knowledge and skills up-to-date.
- All other staff should be trained to a level which enables them to carry out their responsibilities in a competent fashion and maintains familiarity with school policy and procedure. This training should be updated every three years.

- Temporary staff and volunteers should be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities. • Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed upon the school for child protection by making them aware of this policy which is published on the school web-site
- If a child is on the child protection register, the CPO will notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than 2 days for a pupil
- Develop effective links with local agencies and co-operate fully with their enquiries
- Attend case conferences or meetings if required
- Keep written records of concerns about children
- Ensure that all records are kept securely, separate from the pupil file, locked away and accessible only to the CPOs
- The CPO will ensure that the Head is kept informed of any child protection issues
- On an annual basis the CPO will report to the directors on any child protection issues that have occurred in the school, training requirements and this document will be reviewed.
- Any deficiencies in Child protection that come to light before this review will be implemented without delay.

1.7. RECRUITMENT

The Firs School is fully committed to ensuring that safe recruitment practice is followed, outlined by the following procedures

- Job Advertisements state our commitment to safeguarding and this is included in the job specification
- Curriculum Vitae, 2 references, and an application form must be submitted for each applicant
- In interview, any gaps in employment are queried
- Conditional offer of appointment made prior to pre-appointment checks
- Head, Deputy Head and Bursar are trained in Safer Recruitment (2009)
- References received must include reference to any child protection issues
- Identity will be verified
- Qualifications will be checked
- All appointments are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure, full Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority checks (formerly List 99) which includes provision of two forms of identity check
- Prospective staff must declare their medical fitness for the role
- Appropriate registration and confirmation of General Teaching Council, Qualified Teacher Status and statutory Induction where applicable
- The Bursar keeps a Central Register of staff with appropriate documentation

- Staff files are kept by the Bursar
- Peripatetic teachers and supply teachers will be checked in the same way.

1.8. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

Children who have been the victims of abuse or have witnessed violence or trauma may need additional support and care in order to develop their self-esteem. Their behaviour may be challenging and the school will endeavour to support the pupil in a number of ways:

- Providing appropriate curricular support
- Maintaining an ethos promoting a positive, secure and supportive environment to build pupil self esteem
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy provides support for vulnerable pupils
- Liaising with other agencies and professional services
- Ensuring that, if any child on the Child Protection register leaves the school, their information is transferred to the new school and that the child's social worker is informed

1.9. STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ALLEGATION PROCEDURE

The procedure aims to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded accusations. Children who report that they have been abused by a member of staff must be listened to and heard, whatever form their attempts to communicate take. If a child does not wish to take the matter further, very careful consideration must be given to the child's age and level of understanding and to whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm.

Members of staff who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Head. A written, dated record should be made of the allegations as soon as practicable, and certainly within 24 hours.

If an allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Head, the person to whom the allegation is made will immediately inform the chair of directors, who will consult with the school's CPO.

1.9.1 CONSIDERING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ALLEGATION

When an allegation is made against a member of staff (including volunteers) there should be an urgent initial consideration by the Head of whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant an investigation.

The Head should consult the designated LA officer and the social services officer as part of the initial consideration. The substantive decision on whether to investigate under local child protection procedures rests with the child protection agencies.

Possible outcomes of the initial consideration would be that:

- an immediate referral under the local child protection procedure must be made.

- there is reason to suppose abuse **could** have occurred and that referral under the local child protection procedure or under internal disciplinary procedures **may be** necessary.

The school will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, any details of any action taken and decisions reached, on a person's confidential personnel file with a copy being given to the individual.

1.9.2 ALLEGATIONS WARRANTING A REFERRAL

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to social care and the police. Others will not seem so serious. However, even less serious allegations should be followed up and examined objectively by someone **independent of the school**. The designated LA officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the school's attention. The LA designated officer will discuss the matter with the school's management and an immediate referral may be made to the children's social care and a request made for a strategy discussion to take place.

The Head is not expected to:

- investigate the allegation itself
- interview pupils.

1.9.3 ACTION SUBSEQUENT TO A REFERRAL

The school should keep the person who is subject to the allegation informed of the progress of the case and arrange to provide appropriate support to the individual while the case is ongoing. This should also occur where the individual is suspended. If the person is a member of a union or professional association he or she should be advised to contact that body at the outset. The LA officer should consult as to how to inform parents. However, in some cases parents may need to be informed immediately, eg if there is an injury.

In some cases a formal strategy discussion might be needed and investigation by social care and/or the police. Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be dealt with by the school. Appropriate action should be taken within three working days.

1.9.4 INVESTIGATIONS

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being considered/investigated. Investigation should be completed as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Disciplinary investigations may need to be conducted by someone independent of the school to ensure objectivity. A report to the school should be provided within 10 working days. The school should then decide within two working days whether a disciplinary hearing is needed. The hearing should be held within 15 working days.

The two possible types of investigation are under:

- local child protection procedures (by the police, social services or NSPCC), or

- the school's disciplinary procedures.

Any disciplinary process should be separated clearly from child protection investigations. The child protection process has different objectives from the disciplinary procedure **and the two should not be confused**. Any investigation by the police or child protection agencies will take priority over an internal investigation by the school. An internal investigation should **be held in abeyance** pending the outcome of an external investigation.

1.9.5 POLICE INVOLVEMENT

If the strategy discussion determines that a police investigation is required the police should set a target date for reviewing the progress of the investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution Service to consider whether to charge the individual, continue to investigate or close the investigation. If the police or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence all information should be passed to the school immediately.

1.9.6 NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS INVOLVED

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about any allegation as soon as possible. They should be informed about the progress of the case and the outcome. The children's social care should be involved where support is needed.

Unless there is an objection by the child protection agency concerned, notification that an allegation is being investigated should be given by the Head to:

- the child, children or parent making the allegation
- the accused member of staff
- the chair of directors.

Along with the notification, the Head should also explain the likely course of action.

1.9.7 WHEN SUSPENSION IS APPROPRIATE

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed. In some cases suspension will need to be considered. According to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2000, this will be the case where:

- the child is at risk of significant harm
- the police are likely to be involved
- there might be grounds for dismissal.

The decision to suspend an employee rests with the school. All circumstances in the case need to be carefully considered and advice taken. The LA designated officer should regularly monitor the progress of cases. Reviews should be conducted fortnightly or monthly.

1.9.8 SUPPORT DURING A SUSPENSION

If appropriate, the suspended member of staff should be given the name of a LA officer as an information contact and arrangements should be made for him or her to be contacted regularly with information.

Support will be needed for the child or children making the allegations and their parents. Consideration should also be given to what support may be needed for others at the school, both staff and pupils.

At the end of the investigation, a meeting should be arranged to inform the member of staff of the next steps. The member of staff may be accompanied or represented by a representative or friend at this meeting.

1.9.9 ACTION ON CONCLUSION OF A CASE

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed the LA designated officer should discuss with the school whether a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the GTC is required.

If a person who has been suspended is allowed to return to work the school should consider how best to enable this to happen. In some cases a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor might be appropriate. The future contact with any children involved should also be considered.

In the case of a false allegation it should be considered whether the matter should be referred to children's social care or the police.

1.10. SUMMARY OF STAFF ACTIONS

The school sets out the following guidelines for staff to support them and ensure that they understand the Safeguarding Policy and their role in ensuring safe practice:

- Staff must not promise confidentiality if a child confides to them about a sensitive issue
- Staff must not ask leading questions or promise that things will be resolved
- Staff must recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential
- Staff must record in writing the discussion, and then date, sign and pass the record to the CPO
- Staff must record in writing all concerns, discussions about a child, decisions made and reasons for those decisions. These records will be kept in a secure place
- Staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place the pupils or themselves at risk of harm or allegation of harm
- Procedures regarding allegations that may be made against a member of staff are included in this document.
- Concerns regarding a member of staff should be reported directly to the Head – if the concern is regarding the Head the matter should be brought to the immediate attention of the Directors

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The school undertakes to report to the Secretary of State via the Independent Safeguarding Authority, within one month of leaving the school, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. Such reports should contain as much evidence as possible. Failure to take this action constitutes an offence.

This policy has links to the following additional policies in the school:

- Behaviour Policy (including Anti-bullying)
- Complaints Procedure
- Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct/Guidelines (in Staff Handbook)
- ICT Code of Conduct (in Staff Handbook)
- Equality Opportunities and Race Policy (in Staff Handbook)

This policy and its efficiency and effectiveness will be reviewed at least annually or as soon as possible after the introduction of any changes in the most recent advice or guidance.

1.11. REVIEWS

This policy was reviewed by

SignedP. Williams.....
.....11 Feb 10.....

This policy was approved by

SignedM.Denton.....
.....11 Feb 10.....

The next revision date and annual report to directors is11 Feb 2011..

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