

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

Swanmore CE Primary School recognises its prime responsibility to promote the welfare of its children. Children have a right to feel secure. Children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. It is the statutory duty of the school to work within the spirit of the Children's Act 1989 and to follow the guidelines and procedures of Hampshire's Area Child Protection Committee. The purpose of this document is to affirm the school's duty to recognise and refer children at risk. It will also outline the school's pastoral responsibility to inform, advise and educate children to enable them to protect themselves from abuse.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We believe that:-

- all children have the right to be protected from abuse.
- at all stages, the prime concern must be the interests and safety of the child.
- children should be encouraged to talk and know they are listened to.

We aim to:-

- make children feel secure and realise their viewpoints are valued.
- provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults whom they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children.
- use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Use the curriculum to raise children's awareness and self-esteem.

The CPLO must be informed of any case of suspected abuse or of any young person who may be at risk of suffering abuse and he/she must then refer the matter to Social Services.

CHILD PROTECTION LIAISON OFFICER

At Swanmore CE Primary School the CPLO is Andy Yeoman, Headteacher.

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD PROTECTION LIAISON OFFICER

- liaise with Social Services as laid down in the County Council's procedures.
- co-ordinate information from Social Services regarding young persons on the school roll who are either in care or subject to an order following child protection proceedings.
- keep records of any cases of suspected abuse reported to Social Services and any current notes.
- ensure all staff, including newly appointed staff, are aware of the County Council's Guidelines for Child Protection, the role of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) as well as the school's own policy and procedures.
- be available to provide advice to staff on interpretation of County Council and School Procedures.
- share expertise or information/experience gained from INSET opportunities with other members of staff.
- Ensure Child Protection training for all staff is carried out regularly.

Reviewed and Updated: November 2009

PROCEDURES FOR STAFF

(re: Child Protection Policy)

The following procedures should be read in conjunction with the Hampshire County Child Protection Committee's Child Protection Procedures (Yellow File: Headteacher's Office) and the DFE Circular 10/95 Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service.

Should abuse be suspected, a record of all disclosures received will need to be made using the "Cause for Concern" Form straight after the event or within 24 hours of the disclosure, including all notes and the CPLO/Headteacher informed. In an emergency, the Police should be contacted.

If a child volunteers information about abuse to a member of staff, it may be done obliquely, rather than directly, eg through journals, role play, etc.

Any early discussions with the child should, so far as possible, adhere to the following basic principles:-

- listen to the child, rather than directly question or prompt him or her.
- never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, date, setting and personnel present as well as what was said/observed.
- record all subsequent events, behaviour etc which are relevant.

It is important to make an accurate record of all that has happened, stating the facts of any injury, times, explanations and action taken. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail. Any comment by the child concerned, or by an adult who might be the abuser, about how the injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting the words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made.

The CPLO should then be able to reach a judgement as to whether the cluster of indicators, context and severity of incident necessitates further action.

Therefore it is important to stress that the criteria for referral are:-

- there are grounds for suspecting abuse.
- there is potential risk of suffering abuse.

The Headteacher or CPLO should then contact Social Services and make a clear statement of:

- the known facts.
- any suspicions or allegations.
- whether or not there has been any contact with the child's family.

The Headteacher or CPLO should inform the Divisional Education Welfare Officer and send a copy of all actions taken to the Assistant County Education Officer (ACEO).

School staff should *not* notify or make enquiries of parents when abuse is suspected, even if a pupil has been taken to hospital.

Should the disclosure or suspicion of abuse involve a member of staff, the Headteacher or CPLO must still refer the matter to Social Services, but the Headteacher must also report the matter to the ACEO and follow guidance set out in HCC Child Protection Procedures.

Recognition of Child Abuse

Parents, carers and other persons can harm children either by direct acts or failure to provide care, or both. Children may suffer neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse or a combination of such types of abuse.

NEGLECT: The persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to danger; including cold or starvation, or extreme 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 ABUSE: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent; the child may be dependent and or/developmentally immature.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment and this category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

These definitions should be used as a guide for identifying children at risk and for statistical purposes.

SCHOOLS AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Legal Framework

- Under the 1989 Children Act, the welfare of the child always takes priority over parents' wishes.
- Education (School Records) Regulations 1989 require that parents have a right to see all manually held school records except those concerned with child protection, eg abuse.
- Those 'in loco parentis' (childminders, playgroups, schools) may legally 'do what is reasonable' to promote a child's welfare in the absence of parental consent.
- Any person can apply to the court for an Emergency Protection Order on the grounds that 'there is reasonable cause to believe the child is likely to suffer significant harm if not removed'.
- Local authority Social Services Departments have a statutory duty to investigate if they suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- If a child is asked leading questions during inquiry by any person after making complaint of abuse, this can render the evidence inadmissible.
- 'Parental responsibility' is held automatically by the child's mother and married father. An unmarried father can acquire parental responsibility by legal agreement with the mother or through the court so also can step-father and paternal grandparents.

