

ST SWITHUN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL INCLUDING EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

POLICY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS

This policy can be accessed on the school's website at www.stswithuns.com

Introduction

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Child Protection (CP) policy is written in accordance with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board, DCSF guidelines found in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) and Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)

St Swithun's Junior School is a caring community, committed to the nurture and encouragement of each child. As such we fully recognise our responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding children. The school can play its part in the prevention of abuse and neglect, through our own policies and procedures for safeguarding children and through the curriculum. We seek to create and maintain a safe environment for children. Our procedures will help us to identify young people who are suffering or who are at risk of suffering significant harm. We will offer support and make appropriate referrals with the aim of keeping children safe both at home and at school. We operate safe recruitment procedures which include CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations.

Definition of child abuse

An abused child is any child, under the age of 18, who has suffered from, or is believed likely to be at risk of, significant physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

Our policy applies to all staff working in the school. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we operate safe recruitment procedures, including Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance and the checks required by the Independent Schools Standards Regulations in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan

- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

The School's Responsibilities

St Swithun's Junior School will ensure that it has appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which we believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse. These procedures will cover circumstances in which a member of staff or a volunteer is accused or suspected of abuse. We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

- Staff (full-time and part-time) are trained in child protection, updated every 3 years, are alert to signs of abuse and will report any concerns or suspicions to the Headmistress, Mrs Pim Grimes, who is the designated person, of status and authority, who takes responsibility for child protection matters. Mrs Grimes is the Child Protection Officer. The CPO is trained in child protection, updated every 2 years, and in inter-agency working. (Voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the arrangements) Mr Roger Marshall, the Deputy Head, is the Deputy Child Protection Officer.
- In the EYFS the Headmistress, Mrs Pim Grimes, is the designated practitioner with lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with the local statutory children's agencies as appropriate. Mrs Pim Grimes will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children on the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action, or sanction, taken in respect of these allegations, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.
- The school will establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- We will ensure that the children know that they can approach any adult in the school if they are worried, and they will be listened to
- Opportunities will be provided in the PHSE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse
- The School undertakes to remedy immediately any deficiency or weakness within the Child Protection policy, and the efficiency with which it is implemented, without delay. An annual review of the Child Protection policy, and the efficiency with which it is implemented, is undertaken by the School Council, one of whose members has specific responsibility for Child Protection matters.

We will take account of the procedures of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board and guidance issued by the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) to:

- Ensure that the Governing Body understands its responsibilities under the Education Act 2002
- Ensure we have a designated teacher for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role

- Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the designated teacher responsible for child protection and their role
- Ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert for signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated teacher responsible for child protection
- Ensure that every member of staff receives appropriate levels of training to fulfil their child protection responsibilities effectively
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendances at case conferences
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations
- Develop and follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer
- Ensure safe selection and recruitment practices are always followed

Child Protection Procedures

Introduction

All members of staff and volunteers should be familiar with St Swithun's Child Protection Policy as set out in the Staff Handbook. The Headmistress has responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and for liaising with other agencies. The following guidance is provided to assist staff in implementing our policy.

Recognition of abuse will depend on:

- Being aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse
- Being aware that abuse can occur in all socio-economic groupings
- Being alert to the possibility of any injury being non-accidental or illness being avoidable
- Having suspicions where a pattern of injuries occurs over time
- Concern where explanations are not consistent with injuries
- Awareness of the vulnerability to abuse of children with disabilities
- Sensitivity to changes in children's behaviour
- Awareness of situations where another child in the household has been harmed
- Knowledge of abusers living in family settings
- Responding to a child who discloses abuse

Staff should be concerned if a pupil:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's activities
- Regularly has unexplained injuries

- Frequently has injuries, even when apparently reasonable explanations are given
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations of how injuries were sustained
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
- Uses sexual language or indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his/her age or discloses an experience in which he/she may have been significantly harmed

The role of the Headmistress is to:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures
- Ensure that appropriate training in child protection and support is provided to all staff including those who work part-time; staff training is updated every 3 years. CPO training, including inter-agency working is updated every 2 years
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns i.e. refer to Social Services
- Liaise with Social Services over suspected cases of child abuse
- Ensure that confidential records are kept securely and made available to staff with immediate responsibility for a child's welfare
- Submit reports to and attend child protection conferences
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors pupils who have been identified as at risk

School Procedures

- Any member of staff with immediate concerns about a pupil must inform the Headmistress
- Staff should make a note of any disclosure, including the time, setting and people present, detailing what the child said and the child's presentation and behaviour as observed. This record should be written at the time, signed and dated, with a record of all action taken.
- The Headmistress will decide whether the concerns should be referred to outside agencies
- If a referral is made to social services the Headmistress will ensure that a written report is made of the concerns
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any pupil who has been identified as at risk, or who has been placed on the child protection register
- If a pupil who is on the child protection register changes schools the Headmistress will inform social services
- In the EYFS Mrs Pim Grimes will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children on the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

If a pupil discloses that he/she has been abused the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief

- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality as it might be necessary to refer the case to social services
- Reassure the pupil that what has happened is not his/her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen rather than ask direct questions
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions
- Not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to anyone else

Record Keeping. When a pupil has made a disclosure the member of staff should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation
- Not destroy the original notes in case a court needs them
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour as well as the words used by the child
- Draw a diagram or use the skin map to indicate the position of bruising or other injury
- Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions

Allegations against members of staff – Underlying Principles

The welfare principle must be upheld in all cases and the child and parent must be listened to and taken seriously. The Headmistress also has a duty of care to staff who are the subject of an allegation and should ensure that they are treated fairly and offered appropriate professional support.

Process

Any allegation against a member of staff, or volunteer, will be managed in accordance with DCSF guidance. If a complaint is made against a member of staff directly to the police or social services, it is likely that the investigation will begin a multi agency strategy and an agreement will be reached as to whether or not a full child protection investigation is necessary.

When an allegation of abuse is made directly to the Headmistress, she will establish when and where the incident is alleged to have taken place, what led up to it, who was involved and who witnessed it. The context in which an incident occurs is crucial to understanding whether it is more properly dealt with as a conduct or competency issue or whether it is a child protection issue.

The Headmistress will then make a judgement as to whether or not the matter should be referred to social services. In the case of an allegation against the Headmistress of the Junior School, the Headmistress of the Senior School will make a preliminary investigation.

In the absence of the Headmistress of the Junior School, any allegation should be passed to the Headmistress of the Senior School, in the absence of both Headmistresses any allegation should be passed to the Chairman of the Council (the chair of governors).

In a case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

All staff should be aware that any physical contact with pupils could be open to misinterpretation and should ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil and so on.)

The school will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) 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. (The Independent Safeguarding Authority, PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA (0300 123 1111))

If staff feel that a child abuse issue has not been dealt with appropriately, or have reason to be concerned about the behaviour of a senior member of staff, they should speak first to the Chairman of Council. If the concerns remain, they should, without fear of recrimination, go directly to the Local Authority Child Protection Unit or contact **Ofsted on 08456 404040**

**Barbara Piddington Allegations.officer@hants.gov.uk
01962 876265**

**The Child Protection Coordinator/Allegations Officer
07903649503**

**Hants Direct Children's Service Professionals' line
01329 225379**

**Winchester Social Services Department:
01962 869313**

**Hampshire Safeguarding Children' Board (SCB)
01962 876231**

**Children's Rights Director
www.rights4me.org**

All our procedures for dealing with these problems are constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. Please also refer to the separate document [Policy for Child Protection.](#)

The school Council undertakes an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

This policy is available to parents on the school website.

Updated annually
(Updated March 2010 PSG)