

# The St Michael Steiner School

## Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Receive the child in reverence  
Educate the child in love  
Let the child go forth in freedom. *Rudolf Steiner*

### Statement of Aims and Objectives

The St Michael Steiner School strives to create an environment where learning, truth, justice, respect, spirituality and community are promoted. The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our care, regardless of age, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. In situations where child abuse is suspected, our paramount responsibility is to the child. We recognise that everyone who comes into contact with the children in our school in their everyday work has a duty to safeguard and protect them and should demonstrate commitment and priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including staff, trustees, parents and volunteers.

This policy is guided by the following four principles as outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children':

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

If we are worried about the safety or welfare concern about a child within our school we have a legal duty and responsibility to act on our concerns. We will discuss our concerns with parents and carers, in the first instance, and if necessary, make a referral to Hounslow Children's Specialist Services or the local authority where the child lives. **If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to children's social care immediately.**

### Designated safeguarding lead persons:

We have two Designated Safeguarding Lead teachers and a third in training, plus a safeguarding trustee:

- Katie Sharrock (early years)
- Dorothea Van Breda (lower and upper school)
- Stuart Purdy is currently undertaking training (September 2016) to join the Safeguarding team in the lower and upper school.
- Roy Allen (Trustee)

A full description of their roles and responsibilities is found in Appendix 2.

This policy has regard for the following laws, policies and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/447595/KCSIE\\_July\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447595/KCSIE_July_2015.pdf)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> (March 2015)
- London Child Protection procedures (March 2016) <http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (HM Gov March 2015)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 – Statutory Guidance for local authorities, maintained school, independent schools, academies and free school – February 2015 (June 2016)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (2015)
- The Prevent Duty (March 2016): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

This policy is supported by the following appendices:

1. Essential contacts for information and advice if you suspect child abuse
2. Roles and responsibilities of designated person
3. Working with parents
4. Working with diversity, including abuse of disabled children
5. Record keeping: disclosure form
6. Allegations of abuse against staff
7. Child Abuse – an overview

This policy is supported by a number of other school policies available on our website:

- Staff behaviour policy
- Holding and physical restraint policy (early years and lower school)
- Prevent duty
- Human values statement
- Staff whistle blowing policy
- Safe recruitment policy
- Use of mobile phones, digital photography and social networking policy
- Media and E-safety policy
- Out of hours babysitting policy

## How our school supports this child protection policy

- By working through the curriculum, and within the overall ethos of Steiner/ Waldorf education to equip children, in an age-appropriate way, with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- Working through the curriculum, in an age-appropriate way, to help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- Continuing to develop awareness in all staff of the need for child protection (particular care will be taken with children with disabilities and SEN), and everybody's responsibilities in identifying abuse. This will be done through:
  - Induction
  - In-house child protection training (via staff meetings or Inset days)
  - Whole school training (external specialist trainers coming to us)
  - Appropriate external training for designated safeguarding lead persons
- Ensuring all staff are aware of referral procedures within the school;
- Ensuring all staff abide by the staff behaviour policy;
- Ensuring safe recruiting policies and procedures are used in the appointment of all staff, trustees and volunteers;
- Monitoring children who have been identified as 'at risk';
- Ensuring outside agencies are involved where appropriate.

Awareness of need mainly comes from teachers' own observations and from discussions with colleagues at weekly College and Early years, Lower and Upper School Pedagogical meetings, during allocated time slots. At such meetings, staff must make the designated member of staff aware, not only of their concerns about deliberate harm or neglect, but also to take into account the broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Poor attendance and punctuality – this may also be a sign of neglect, safeguarding concerns, travel to a conflict zone, or FGM and forced marriage
- Concerns about appearance and dress
- Changed or unusual behaviour
- Concerns about health and emotional well being, this includes providing first aid, intimate care, and meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions
- Deterioration in educational progress
- Discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child
- Concerns about home conditions or situations
- Concerns about pupil on pupil (peer on peer) abuse (including serious bullying).

Early assessment and intervention are important because situations where abuse is or may be developing can, at times, be resolved by preventative services outside the child protection procedures. A range of early intervention and preventative initiatives are in use in our school.

## What is child abuse

Specific safeguarding issues identified in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2016) are listed below. Further details on the first four points can be found in Appendix 7.

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example 'sexting' and accessing pornography
- teenage relationship abuse
- substance misuse
- issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
- domestic violence
- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children
- other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults

## **Bullying**

We recognise that bullying can result in impacting on a child's functioning and self-esteem. Our Bullying Policy is available separately.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, from October 2015 there is a mandatory reporting duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>

## **Human Values and Indoctrination**

As part of broader requirements relating to the quality of education and to promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, there is an explicit requirement for all schools in the UK to promote what are referred to in the legislation as 'British Values'.

These are defined as:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

Although the school whole-heartedly endorses and promotes these values, we do not see them as exclusively British and to refer to them as such would not be a true reflection of the ethos of our school. It is also very likely to cause offence in a multi-cultural community such as ours.

Regardless of the statutory duty to do so, we have always promoted, through our curriculum and policies, what we see as fundamental human rights. These include:

- the right of the members of any society to decide how and by whom it is governed.
- respect for the fact that the laws of the country in which we live have been instated by the consent of our elected representatives, and therefore represent the collective will of the people and apply equally to all.
- the right of every individual to think and believe whatever he/she likes, and to act on those thoughts and beliefs within the law of the land as long as they do not harm anyone else or inhibit anyone else's freedom to do so.

We believe that these three more than encompass the spirit of what is meant by 'British values' in the legislation. This statement is published in the Parents' Handbook so that parents are clear about the values that are promoted in the school. As well as ensuring that our own staff respect these human values, we ensure that any visiting speakers or teachers – whether invited by staff or by students – are aware of and respect them. Visitors are always appropriately supervised.

Our school has a duty, known as the Prevent Duty, to protect children from the risk of radicalisation. Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. While young children are more vulnerable to the direct influence of the people around them, older students who have access to the internet are at a far greater risk of exposure to exploitative propaganda. Support for students who may be seen as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. The Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion of these issues. We are mindful of our existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

## School Procedures

*Children are a precious resource, as are those that work to protect and nurture them. Working together and across boundaries, we can make a real difference to the lives of all children.*

Paul Boateng, Every Child Matters, Green Paper

### What to do if you suspect abuse?

Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to safeguarding should immediately discuss it with the designated safeguarding lead. Allegations of abuse must be given the highest priority and referred immediately. It should be made clear to children that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in respect of child protection issues.

Consider what you know, what you have seen, and things about the child that causes concern.

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Listen to the child if she/he tells you of abuse. Reassure the child that they did the right thing to tell you. Never promise to keep something a secret. Let the child know you will be telling the designated safeguarding person as you all have a responsibility to keep the child safe. Don't probe or interrogate the child. Write down what the child told you using the child's own words.

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Discuss your concerns urgently with the designated safeguarding lead for safeguarding:

Katie Sharrock or Dorothea Van Breda

The designated person will discuss and review the concerns and advise on what actions to take next, including whether a referral to Hounslow Children's Specialist Services (or the child's home local authority if living outside Hounslow) is necessary.

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Unless consultation with parents/ carers is likely to place the child at risk of significant harm through delay or the parents' actions:

- Arrange to see the child's parents /carers. Be open and honest, tell parents the reasons for your concerns and seek explanations for your concerns. When meeting with parents, be aware that the content may be highly emotive. Meet parents together with a designated safeguarding lead person. Avoid losing your temper or sounding punitive.
- Explain your duty to report your concerns and try to get parental agreement for a referral to Hounslow Children's Specialist Services (or the local authority where the child lives, if not in Hounslow).
- If the parents refuse to give permission for the referral, further advice should be sought and a referral made without consent if this is necessary to secure the child's safety.

Keep a written record of all concerns, any discussions with the child and parents, discussions with Ofsted and social services, and any decisions made..

For disclosure form, please see Appendix 5

### **Reporting concerns about children**

The child protection lead will decide on an appropriate course of action. Advice in the first instance will be taken from:

- Hounslow Family Information Services: 020 8583 3470 or 0800 783 1696
- Hounslow Child Protection Hotline: 020 8583 6600 opt 1 (9-5 Mon-Fri)
- Out of hours Emergency Duty Team for Social Care: 020 8583 2222 (after 5pm and weekends)

### **What if you feel the designated person has not acted on your concerns**

If you feel your concerns have not been acted upon, it may be due to several reasons including:

- The designated person may have reasonably decided that the concerns are not yet significant and taken an alternative action.
- Information and/or actions may not have been communicated to you.

- Child protection agencies (e.g. social workers, the police) may be in the process of investigating the concern and have yet to decide on actions to safeguard the child.
- There may be confidentiality reasons.
- There may be legal reasons.

If there are no reasonable reasons /circumstances why your concerns have not been acted upon, you should seek further advice from:

#### **Hounslow Children's Social Care (CSC) contacts:**

Sally Phillips – Head of Safeguarding	020 8583 3061
Sally Greig – Child Protection Advisor	020 8583 3064
Hetsie Van Rooyen – Child Protection Advisor	020 8583 3065
Hounslow LADO	020 8583 2785
Ofsted	0300 123 1231 (Mon-Fri, 8am – 6pm)
NSPCC Whistleblowing Hotline	0800 028 0285

### **Listening to children**

Children communicate in many ways, not just verbally, including through their behaviour, actions, reactions and drawings. We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention. This school will therefore:

- Provide a secure environment in which children can feel safe and able to speak about any concerns they may have.
- Ensure children know that there are trusted adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

### **Working with Parents**

We work closely with parents in our school to ensure that they are aware of our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection. The following arrangements are in place:

1. This policy is available on our website, and a printed copy available in the school office.
2. We have a Child Protection statement in our Parents Handbook. The hand book is updated annually and sent to all parents, this refers to our full policy and how to find it –
  - a. Web site
  - b. Policy file
3. School notice board has contact details for designated persons within the school as well as Hounslow Family Services and Ofsted.
4. Our parent's complaints procedure is available in our annually updated Parents Handbook, available on our website.

## Diversity

Parenting and child rearing styles can vary according to class age race, ethnicity, culture and/or religion. All parents have the right to raise their children according to their family traditions and we need to be aware of passing judgement on or discriminating on the basis of difference. However, all children have the right to protection and no parent has the right to abuse their children regardless of their background or circumstance.

We have regard Hounslow Policy and Practice Guidance on Domestic Violence, Child Prostitution and Female Genital Mutilation and we will refer to the Hounslow Children's Specialist Services for guidance and action.

## Information Sharing

In order to safeguard children in our school we recognise there are circumstances under which we need to share information, at times without parental consent, with other professional agencies, e.g. Order of Court, and Police investigating serious crime. The reasons for doing so will be recorded and kept on the child's file.

## Confidentiality

Any records relating to child protection are kept in secure, confidential files, separate from the child's school records. We are not required to disclose to parents any written information relating to child protection. We do endeavour to work in partnership with parents and for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made unless to do so would create an additional risk to the child.

In situations where there are no concerns around the child's safety but it is felt that sharing information would benefit the child and/or the parents (e.g. to access additional help/support with learning, specialist health services, prevention services, parenting support and skill development, undertaking a common assessment (Early Help Hounslow or CAF), referring to Children's Services for children in need of extra support), informed parental consent is required in necessary before information can be shared.

Staff that breach confidentiality policy, or who fail to share information, should face actions under disciplinary/code of conduct policies.

## Recording and Record Keeping

We keep written records of:

- Discussions with child
- Discussion with parents
- Discussion with other designated safeguarding lead person
- Information provided to Children's Specialist Services
- Decisions taken with time and date clearly signed

Keep a copy of written referral confirming the verbal and telephone referral.

### **Good Recording practice:**

Written records may be needed by social workers, other professionals, the police or court at some future date. Parents may also have the right to access your written records. Be concise, objective and factual.

- What did you observe/hear? When and where?
- Exactly what caused your concern and why?
- What did the child say, in their words, or do (if anything)?
- What did the parents say, in their words, if anything?
- How did you reply/respond?
- Describe events/actions/discussions as they happened.
- Avoid judgements and interpretations.

### **Safe Recruitment and Selection**

We practice safe recruitment, selection and monitoring and check that teachers are not prohibited from teaching. Our selection and vetting procedures include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect contact with children through the Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS), with particular regard to those who have lived or worked outside the UK. See our separate Safe Recruitment policy.

### **Allegations Against Staff**

Child protection procedures are applied when there is an allegation or concern that any adult who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

Inappropriate relationships between staff, children or young people include:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (*Sexual Offences Act 2003*)
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see *section 15 Sexual Offences Act 2003*)
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text / e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc)
- Possession of indecent photographs of children.

Adults in this context include paid employees, volunteers, trainees, self-employed workers.

Any teacher who hears an allegation of abuse against another member of staff or volunteer should bring this to the attention of the designated safeguarding lead so that Hounslow Child Protection procedures can be followed.

If the allegation is about one of the designated safeguarding lead persons, speak to the other designated safeguarding lead. Statutory guidance dealing with allegations against professionals is now provided in Part 4 of 'Keeping children safe in education' (DfE, July 2015).

Concerns about members of staff should be addressed to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). A referral form can be found at : <http://www.hscb.org.uk/article.php?id=403&menu=2>

Lyn Wilson 020 8583 2785

Email: [lyn.wilson@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:lyn.wilson@hounslow.gov.uk)

## Appendices

1. Useful contacts for information and advice if you suspect child abuse
2. Roles and responsibilities of designated person
3. Working with parents
4. Working with diversity, including abuse of disabled children
5. Record keeping : disclosure form
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### Appendix 1: Useful contacts:

Hounslow Family Information Service	020 8583 3470 or 0800 783 1696
Hounslow Head of Safeguarding:	020 8583 6554
Child Protection Advisor: Sally Greig	020 8583 3064
Child Protection Advisor: Hetsie Van Rooyen	020 8583 3065
Hounslow LADO Lyn Wilson	020 8583 2785
Chiswick intake team referrals	020 8583 6673
Feltham Intake team referrals	020 8583 6672
Out of office hours (after 5pm and weekends)	020 8583 2222
Ofsted (8am-6pm Mon-Fri)	0300 123 1231
Hounslow Police Station	020 8577 1212
Police Contact for Child Abuse Investigation Team	020 8246 0862
Ofsted Whistle-blowing hotline (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)	0300 123 3155

## Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities of designated safeguarding lead

- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse.
- Recognise when it is appropriate to make a referral.
- Refer and follow up child protection referrals.
- Monitor child protection decisions within the school.
- Monitor child protection practice.
- Ensure there is always a designated member of staff for safeguarding available at all times that school is open for staff to discuss concerns.
- Have knowledge of and experience in implementing child protection procedures.
- Ensure all staff know who the designated safeguarding leads for child protection are.
- Ensure all staff have access to our school's Child Protection policy and procedure.
- Organise safeguarding induction and training for staff as follows:
  - Basic induction for all new staff on arrival, reading staff handbook
  - Ensure all staff are given a copy of and understand the written procedures for managing allegations of harm to a child or learner.
  - Ensure all staff know how to make a complaint and understand policies on whistleblowing.
  - Ensure all staff understand their mandatory duty to report know cases of female genital mutilation.
  - Ensure all staff know what to do if they have concerns about the practice of other adults in respect to the safety and protection of children and learners.
  - Ensure all staff are aware of and adhere to the staff behaviour policy.
  - Ensure all staff, trustees and volunteers have regular basic awareness training every year

- Ensure the designated lead has safeguarding training every two years and their knowledge and skills refreshed at least annually.
- When appropriate invite Local Authority to come and give training in-house for all faculty members
- Every two years basic training for named trustees
- Raise awareness and confidence on child protection procedures for all staff.
- Regularly review policies and procedures.
- Provide support and advice where necessary.
- Communicate with parents.
- Ensure appropriate recording systems are in place and monitor record keeping.
- Distribute relevant information.
- Liaise with external agencies.
- Attend meetings, child protection conferences, core groups etc.
- Regularly update trustees with responsibility for child protection.

Holding responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters can be difficult and stressful so ensure you have the support of the College of Teachers and that they understand and support the nature and extent of your designated person role. One trustee is trained in Safeguarding and can provide support and monitoring of this area: **Roy Allen roy\_allen6@btinternet.com**

Ensure you have access to your own support but do not let feelings or anxieties prevent you and/or your staff team from taking necessary action to protect children. Because we are a small school, the designated safeguarding leads may also ask advice from the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, however this will be in addition to advice and support from Hounslow. As designated teachers we have a duty of care towards staff making referrals about children's situations as well as staff who have allegations made against them.

## Appendix 3 Working with Parents

We see working with parents on a regular, on-going basis as one of the most important aspects of our work. We work at building strong relations with the parents of our children. Children may be with the same kindergarten teacher for three years, followed by eight years with their class teacher. During these years, an open, honest and frank relationship is striven for, through regular parents evenings, one-to-one talks both at school and during home visits, social events and informal drop-off / pick-up conversations in the playground.

Explanations are sought for injuries that happened outside school by the teachers.

When the school decides not to seek parental permission before making a referral, the decision must be recorded in the child's file with reasons, dated and signed, and confirmed in the referral to Children's Specialist Services.

When the school makes a referral without parental permission, the parents should be contacted to inform them that after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.

We must ensure that any concerns are to remain confidential and information and details are shared only with professionals directly concerned with the child.

## Appendix 4 Working with diversity

- Working in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society requires professionals to be committed to equality in meeting the needs of all children and families and to understand the effects of racism as well as cultural and religious misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- In order to make sensitive and informed professional judgements about a child's needs, and parents' capacity to respond to their child's needs, it is important that professionals are sensitive to the differing family patterns and lifestyles and to child rearing patterns that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups.
- At the same time, children from all cultures are subject to abuse and neglect. All children have a right to grow up safe from harm. All children, whatever their religious or cultural background, must receive the same care and safeguards with regard to abuse and neglect.
- Anxiety about being accused of racist practice should not prevent the necessary action being taken to safeguard and promote a child's welfare. Definitions as to what legally constitutes child abuse are indicated in the Policy. Race, cultural and religious factors should not be regarded as acceptable explanations for child abuse or neglect, and are not acceptable grounds for inaction when a child is at risk of significant harm.

### Abuse of Disabled Children

- UK evidence suggests that disabled children are at increased risk of abuse and that the presence of multi-disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect. Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons:
  - They may receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers that may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries.
  - They may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse.
  - They may have communication difficulties that may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

## Appendix 5: Record of concern or disclosure

Child's Name
Class teacher:
Date and time of concern:
Your account of the concern: (what was said, observed, reported, and by whom)
Additional information (your opinion, context of concern/disclosure)
Your response : (what did you do/say following the concern)
Your name :
Your signature :
Your position in school :
Date and time of this recording :
Actions and response of DSP for Safeguarding /Administrator
Name..... Signature ..... date .....

Please continue on other side if necessary. At the end of each block of writing please initial and date. If the concern or disclosure is being related to you by an adult or an older child, they may wish to read through what you have written and initial it also.

## Appendix 6: Allegations of Abuse against Staff

We have regard to the statutory guidance from the Keeping Children Safe in Education, July 2015 Section 4. All allegations or suspicions against staff, whether permanent, temporary, or volunteers, should be taken seriously and considered as requiring a child protection response/enquiry. All allegations against members of staff must be reported to the LADO.

- If the allegation is against one of our designated safeguarding leads, the other safeguarding lead will inform the current chair of college and will then inform the LADO.
- If the allegation is against the chair of college, the designated safeguarding lead will inform the trustees and then the LADO.
- Children's Specialist Services will inform Ofsted of any child protection referrals in respect of any staff in their personal life.

An allegation may require consideration from any of the following four inter-related perspectives:

- Child protection
- Criminal investigation
- Complaint procedures
- Staff disciplinary procedures
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Information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect children.
- Manage disciplinary / complaints aspects
- Facilitate enquiries
- Protect any rights of the alleged perpetrator

We have a dual responsibility – to safeguard the children in our care and to ensure staff are treated fairly.

- If a staff member is faced with an allegation against them, they may benefit from the independent advice of a solicitor.
- If an allegation is made, the staff member should not have any contact with children or their records until the matter has been dealt with.
- Suspension is a neutral act and it should not be automatic. It should be considered in any case where:
  - There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or
  - The allegation warrants investigation by the police, or
  - The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

Once the referral is made to the LADO, they will consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action. The LADO may ask the designated safeguarding lead to provide or obtain relevant additional information, such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations and the individual's current contact with children. The designated safeguarding lead may need to involve the police

The available information will be considered and it will be decided whether an investigation is indicated, who will be involved and arrangements for interviewing:

- The child
  - Any witnesses
  - Parent/guardian/carer
  - The accused staff member
  - The person who made the allegation
- 
- The final decision regarding the person's continued employment will be informed by the outcome of the child protection investigation and/ or criminal investigation.
  - It is not advisable to accept a person's resignation as an alternative to dismissal.
  - Even if the police decide there is not enough evidence to bring criminal charges, the school will decide whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing on the basis of prima facie evidence under our disciplinary code.
  - Even when there is insufficient evidence to support a criminal investigation, Ofsted may pursue the matter under disciplinary, regulatory or complaints procedures and /or bring civil or criminal proceedings against the school.
  - For further advice and support on how to manage an allegation against a staff member, please contact: the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Education: Lyn Wilson, tel: 020 8583 2785 or see <http://www.hscb.org.uk/article.php?id=403&menu=2> for Hounslow Safeguarding Children's Board information.

#### **Unsubstantiated and False Allegations**

- False allegations are rare and may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the school will, in consultation with Hounslow Child Protection Advisor and Ofsted, refer the matter to Children's Specialist Services to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.
- Where it is concluded that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate an allegation, the designated safeguarding lead will consider what further action to take, if any.
- Ofsted may also take further actions, as above.
- If it is established that an allegation has been deliberately invented, the police will be asked to consider what action may be appropriate.

## Appendix 8

### Child Abuse: An Overview

#### What is child abuse and neglect?

Child abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults, as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Children can be abused through the infliction of harm, or through failure to act to prevent harm. Some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Abuse and neglect can affect children of any age, class or family background. Children may be abused within their family, in a setting, in an institution or in the community. Children are abused by people known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Children can be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Children may show signs of being abused in different ways – physically, emotionally, behaviourally, or they may tell you directly.

All staff should be familiar with the definitions and possible indicators of abuse. Whilst some indicators may not ultimately constitute child abuse, all staff have a responsibility to report and discuss any concerns they have about a child with their designated safeguarding and child protection officer.

There are four main categories of abuse and neglect: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Each has its own specific warning indicators, which you should be alert to. **“What to do when you’re worried a child is being abused”** (March 2015) sets out the following descriptions.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens.

Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained:
  - bruises or cuts;
  - burns or scalds; or
  - bite marks.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

### **Sexual abuse and exploitation**

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual

exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action.

However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care ; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.