

# *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

## **Introduction**

The policy for Child Protection applies across the school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are three main elements to our policy:

- a) Prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils
- b) Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of our day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.
- c) Support to pupils who may have been abused.

Whitehall School follows Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Board Child Protection procedures which comply with the DCSF document 'Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education'.

## **Rationale**

A Child Protection policy is a statutory requirement and in an independent school it is good practice that we put in place procedures for handling cases of suspected abuse, including allegations against teachers. In this way we meet our legal obligations as defined in the Children Act 1989 and the Human Rights Act.

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school. Teachers, mid-day supervisors and the secretary may be the first point of disclosure for a child. Whitehall School operates safe recruitment procedures, including CRB checks, and complies with the Independent School Standards Regulations.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility (in conjunction with the Proprietors) to :

- ensure that the designated person for child protection matters receives training in child protection and inter-agency working (updated every two years)
- ensure that the designated practitioner takes a lead in the responsibility for safeguarding children within the Early Years Foundation Stage setting and liaises with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate
- ensure that all staff, including the Head, receive training (updated every three years) and that part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of child protection arrangements
- remedy (without delay) any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements
- ensure that all staff have access to the policy
- appoint a designated member of staff
- ensure that all staff are alert to signs of possible abuse and know to whom to report any concerns or suspicions
- make parents aware of the school's child protection policy
- assist the Proprietors in the requirement for them to undertake an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and report the efficiency with which related duties have been discharged.

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

- ensure that the designated person contacts welfare agencies within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse
- provide guidance for staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil e.g. in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil etc)
- 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. See Appendix E for contact details.

At Whitehall School, the designated person for the school and Early years Foundation Stage is Mr Sean Peace.

It is the responsibility of **all** staff, including teaching assistants and ancillary staff, to:

- be alert to the signs of possible abuse
- report any concerns or suspicions to the designated person.

If a member of staff at the school has a concern about a child, they should talk to the designated person and must fill in a concern log (see appendix B) and pass it to him / her within 24 hours. The designated person, in consultation with the Headteacher/SMT, will decide on the action to take (with guidance from external agencies, if necessary). Concerns include any nagging doubts or hearsay.

It is important to remember that the child's rights are paramount. even if there are no further concerns. You don't have to be sure that a child is being abused.

### **Confidentiality**

Children, their families and staff are entitled to as much privacy and confidentiality as possible. In accordance with Article 8 of the Human Rights Act regarding the right to a private family life, staff should operate on a 'need to know' basis and it is advisable for individuals to discuss confidentiality with only the designated person. However, all information must be shared with the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO), police, Social Care Services, Ofsted as required.

If a child makes a disclosure (see guidance below) or makes an allegation (see guidance below), it is explained to them that his/her statements will be taken seriously but cannot be kept confidential and will be investigated. The child will be told that steps will be taken. Any information will be communicated sensitively to ensure that the child/young person is not left feeling anxious or that he/she is not believed.

Records of concerns will be kept in a locked location and only the designated person, the Headteacher and the SMT will have access to the files. Notes will be shared with parents if requested. Other statutory agencies, but not solicitors, will have access. Each individual's records will be kept separately. For each child protection record, the file will have a facing sheet (see Appendix D) which records:

- the child's full name, date of birth and address
- the name and address of the GP
- information about family members

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

- an indication of where a piece of information is if it has been 'lifted' from the file for some reason
- a note if there is more than one file for the child

In the instance that the designated person is unavailable, the Headteacher or SMT must be told of any concerns and a concern log must be completed. In the event of a disclosure occurring and the designated teacher being unavailable, the Headteacher or SMT will carry out the legal responsibilities that follow disclosure. Confirmation of the most up to date guidance on next steps should be sought from sources listed in Appendix E.

### **Prevention**

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help prevention. The school will therefore:

- a) establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- b) ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- c) include, in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn to for help;
- d) include, in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills

### **Procedures**

Whitehall School will:

- a) ensure that it has a designated senior member of staff, who has undertaken a training course provided by the LEA as a minimum;
- b) ensure every member of staff knows:
  - the name of the designated person and her / his role
  - that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns in line with the school's policy
- c) ensure that members of staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a pupil who may tell of abuse (see Appendix A);
- d) ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the Parent Handbook
- e) provide training for all staff so that they know:

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

- their personal responsibility
  - the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse
  - how to support a child who tells of abuse;
- f) notify Social Services if:
- it should have to exclude a pupil on the Child Protection register either for a fixed term or permanently
  - if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days duration from school (or one day following a weekend);
- g) work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at initial case conferences, core groups and child protection review conferences;
- h) keep a written record of concerns about children (noting the date including the year, event and action taken), even when there is no need to refer the matter to Social Services immediately (see Appendix B & C);
- i) ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations;
- j) ensure that the criminal background of applicants for vacant posts are checked

### **Disclosure**

If a child tells of abuse then this is known as 'disclosure'. The child will tell the person they feel most comfortable with. This could be any member of staff at the school, including ancillary staff or the secretary. The disclosure may come as a result of an innocent statement from a member of staff such as "That's a nasty bruise" or a child may feel that they're sharing a confidence with you. In both cases it is vital that you:

- be attentive, calm and reassuring
- be non-judgemental and express a willingness to take what the child says seriously
- avoid condemning the alleged abuser
- avoid making promises you are not certain you can keep
- don't make assumptions about the child's feelings
- tell the child s/he is brave and right to tell – and it's not his/her fault
- never promise to keep the abuse secret
- tell the child what will happen next
- avoid 'closed' or 'leading' questions – don't ask any more than you have to
- explain that he/she will have to tell what's happening to someone else.

You should then write the disclosure, in as much detail as possible, on the concern log (see Appendix B) and hand it to the designated person as soon as possible.

As a disclosure may result in a criminal investigation, the child must not be 'quizzed' again or prompted to repeat their allegation to another member of staff as this may have adverse effects on the case.

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

Following a disclosure, action must be taken by the designated person or, in the event of the designated person being unavailable, the Headteacher or Senior Teacher. In the first place, the parents will be contacted, if appropriate, and the nature of the disclosure will be shared with them. Parents will be told that advice will be sought from Social Services even if they do not agree to this happening. The most up to date guidance on the further steps should be sought from sources outlined in Appendix E.

Harm is defined in the Children Act 1989 as ill treatment or impairment of health or development. Where there is 'reasonable cause' to suspect significant harm, the Local Authority has a duty to make enquiries.

### **Supporting the Pupil at Risk**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.

This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- a) the content of the curriculum to encourage self esteem and self motivation (see Prevention section);
- b) the school ethos which
  - promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment
  - gives pupils a sense of being valued (see Prevention section);
- c) the school's Behaviour Policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff agree on a consistent approach that focuses on the behaviour of the offence committed by the child, but does not damage the pupil's sense of self worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- d) liaison with other agencies who support the student such as Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Service;
- e) keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

When a pupil on the child protection register leaves, we will transfer information to the new school immediately and inform the Review Manager (see Appendix F).

### **Personal Responsibilities**

It is important that we are all responsible for, and vigilant about, protecting ourselves from allegation. This involves examining areas where we are potentially at risk and minimising those risks.

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

Allegations against staff may be made by children, parents/carers, other staff, volunteers, students, ISI, Ofsted, Local Authority representatives or members of the public. An allegation is defined as any complaint or concern that a person:

- has harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm
- has displayed behaviour involving or related to a child that might constitute a criminal offence
- has behaved in a way that raises concern about the adult's suitability to work with children

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it will be dealt with by the Head in conjunction with the designated person. If the Head is the designated person, they will be assisted by the Senior Teacher.

If an allegation is made against a volunteer, it will be dealt with by the Head in conjunction with the designated person. If the Head is the designated person, they will be assisted by the Senior Teacher.

If an allegation is made against the Head and/or designated person, it will be dealt with by the Proprietors in conjunction with a member of the Senior Management Team.

When dealing with an allegations, the immediate safety of the child and other children who may be affected is paramount. If necessary, medical treatment would be sought without delay.

Clarification of exactly what is being alleged, by whom and whether there are witnesses, is sought. An accurate account, including the time, place and details of the incident and any action, is recorded. This record is signed and dated. Even false allegations must be taken seriously as they may indicate disturbance or dysfunction in the child or family.

The designated person, Head, Proprietor or any other member of staff does NOT investigate the allegation. Any discussions with the alleged perpetrator are kept to a minimum until the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has been informed. In the event of an allegation of sexual abuse, the alleged perpetrator is not alerted to the allegation.

It is not the responsibility of senior personnel, including the designated person for child protection matters, to assess whether a child protection allegation is substantiated.

When an allegation has been made, consideration is given to the fact that potentially a crime may have been committed and it is essential that any evidence is not contaminated. The designated person (unless they are the alleged perpetrator), Ofsted and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is informed. It may be necessary to suspend the worker from all duties immediately until the investigation identifies the level of risk. The suspension must be explained as a 'neutral act', which does not imply guilt, and that this action is necessary to protect all concerned, including the worker (who, as mentioned above, is not given details of the allegation at this stage).

## ***Whitehall School Child Protection Policy***

---

Further advice and guidance may be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer. See Appendix E for contact details.

### **Bullying**

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually.

### **Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

We recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will be particularly sensitive to the signs of abuse.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The implementation of a suitable monitoring system is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the designated child protection person. Whitehall School's monitoring procedures aim to ensure full compliance with the policy at all stages.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed: September 2009\*

*\*To be updated following SP's attendance on CP course in November 2009*

# *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

## **Appendix A: Identifying cases of abuse**

There are four categories of abuse: emotional, physical, sexual and neglect.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are:

- Worthless, unloved, inadequate, loved only so far as they meet another person's needs
- It may also feature: age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, the corruption of the child

**Physical Abuse** may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning or suffocation, feigning the symptoms of ill health in a child and / or deliberately causing ill health of a child (known as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausens Syndrome by proxy)

**Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may include:

- Physical contact, including penetrative acts (e.g. rape, buggery)
- Non-penetrative acts such as
  - involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material
  - watching sexual activities
  - encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may involve the parent / carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, shelter and / or clothing
- protect a child from physical harm or danger
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

### **Appendix B: Concern Log**

<b>Name and Address of the School:</b> Whitehall School, High Street, Somersham, Cambridgeshire, PE28 3EH Tel/Fax: 01487 840966 E-mail: office@whitehallschool.com	
Child's Name:	D.O.B:
Today's Date:	Time:
Your Name (Print):	Your Signature:
Your Role:	
Date of Concern/Incident:	Time of Concern/Incident
Describe the incident as factually as possible. Include who was involved, where it happened, exactly what happened etc. Remember to describe clearly any behavioural or physical signs you have observed:	
Check to make sure your report is clear now – and will also be clear to a stranger reading it next year.	
Action taken:	
Received by Designated Person for Child Protection Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____	
Proposed action by the Designated Person:	

*Continue overleaf if necessary*



# *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

## **Appendix D: Facing Sheet**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_

**D.O.B.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Family:**

Name	Relationship	Concerns?
_____	_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	_____	<input type="text"/>
_____	_____	<input type="text"/>

**GP:**

**Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is the child on the Child Protection Register?      Yes / No

Is there more than one file for this child?      Yes / No

**Notes:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

### **Appendix E: Sources of advice and contact details**

Education Child Protection Service Advice Helpline	01223 712096*
Cambridgeshire Direct (Children's Services)	0345 045 0180
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01480 372442
Ofsted	08456 404040
Social Care Services (in office hours, 8 am – 8 pm, Mon – Fri) (outside office hours)	0845 045 5203 01733 234724
Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)	0300 123 1111

*\* Term time only 8.30 am – 4.30 pm*

The following information appears on the Cambridgeshire County Council website at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenyoungpeople/childprot](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenyoungpeople/childprot)

Child Protection is the collective name for services aimed at protecting children from any sort of abuse.

Where a child appears to be in danger or at risk of abuse we (Children & Young People's Services) have a legal duty to investigate. If, as a result, we still have concerns, we will discuss the position with colleagues in the Police, Health Services and Schools. The result might be that we would put the child's name on the Child Protection Register. A plan is made with parents or carers and other agency colleagues to offer support and to protect the child

To report a case of actual or suspected child abuse:

- telephone 0345 045 5203 from 8 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays)
- outside these hours telephone the Emergency Duty Team 01733 234724 OR
- call Cambridgeshire Police - see their website for local office numbers or call 999 OR
- call National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 0808 800 5000

If you are not sure what to look out for, see our leaflet "Child Abuse - Reporting to the Office of Children and Young People's Services".

Cambridgeshire's Local Safeguarding Children Board is the group that brings

## *Whitehall School Child Protection Policy*

---

together representatives from social care services, police, health and schools to ensure effective arrangements to protect Cambridgeshire's children.

Further information (as follows) can be found on the website of the Local Safeguarding Children Board at [www.cambslscb.org.uk](http://www.cambslscb.org.uk)

### **WELCOME TO THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD WEBSITE**

We want to make sure that children and young people feel safe and cared for in Cambridgeshire and hope that this website is useful to those who want to know more about the work of the LSCB. It is accessible to children and young people, families and communities as well as professionals working with children.

LSCBs have been established by the government to ensure that organisations work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare. In Cambridgeshire this includes Social Care Services, Education, Health, the Police, Probation, Sports and Leisure Services, the Voluntary Sector, Youth Offending Team, Connexions, Early Years Services.

LSCB Administrator  
7 The Meadows  
Meadow Lane  
St Ives  
Cambs  
PE27 4LG  
Telephone: 01480 373758  
Fax: 01480 376377  
Email: [Joanne.Little@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Little@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)