

Lucton School Safeguarding and Child Protection

Every member of staff and every volunteer must be aware of their duty to follow the law laid down in the Children Act 1989. In the event of suspected child abuse, the procedure outlined below must be followed.

Physical, emotional or sexual abuse might be disclosed by the pupil or suspected by a member of staff. Disclosure may be made by any pupil to the 'trusted person'. Suspicion of abuse may also fall upon the shoulders of any member of staff.

Designated Child Protection Persons

Mrs Lulu Parker (Matron)

Mrs Gill Thorne (Headmistress)

Policy

Lucton School's policy is linked with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board. The school is committed to following the guidance issued by the DCSF "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education", and to ensuring that its child protection procedures are compatible with, and meet all the requirements of the Herefordshire Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB). It also recognises the importance of actively contributing to multi-agency safeguarding policy and practice.

All Staff and regular volunteers are appointed following the DCSF guidelines on safe recruitment procedures (including CRB checks).

All colleagues, teaching or non-teaching, and volunteers share a responsibility to be alert for signs of Child Abuse. Any concerns, however vague, must be passed on to the designated member of staff. It is the designated member of staff who is responsible for the child protection policy, liaising with the social services authority and coordinating action with social services and (where applicable) the police following any child protection allegation or suspicion affecting a pupil. Staff should also report any allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues, which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. The school will ensure that no retribution or disciplinary action is taken against staff or pupils for "whistle blowing" in good faith.

Child Protection concerns should be recorded in writing, dated and signed. These should be passed to the designated teacher, who will keep all documentation on file and, after consultation with Social Services and the Headmistress, will decide whether a referral is necessary. Allegations or suspicions of abuse will lead to a referral being made to the local Social Services Department within twenty four hours (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral). Should the allegation or suspicion be made about the designated person or their spouse, members of staff should go to the Headmistress who has also been trained in Child Protection. Should the allegation or suspicion be made about the Headmistress or her spouse, members of staff should go to the Matron and designated Child Protection Officer, Mrs Lulu Parker. Child Protection records must be kept separately and do not have to be disclosed to parents.

The Policy is reviewed annually. In addition any changes or issues are implemented immediately.

Training

Designated Child Protection Persons undertake training every two years (including CAF).

All other members of staff and volunteers undertake training every three years.

Definition of Child Abuse

The law defines four types of Child Abuse: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional and Neglect Abuse. Apart from noticing bruising or other signs of physical abuse, the main symptoms of abuse are the behaviours we would normally pick up as part of our Pastoral care for pupils, for example inappropriate sexual awareness or talk, extreme tiredness or lethargy, self-destructive behaviour, unusual or unexplained gifts of money, depression, etc.; however, these symptoms may, of course, have other causes. Be alert also for changes in a child's normal pattern of behaviour or attitude.

Child abuse is a term which describes all the ways in which a child's health and development are damaged by the actions or inaction of others. It is usually perpetrated by adults, but sometimes by other children, and can take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. Types of abuse may overlap.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person physically hurts, injures or kills a child through hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. It can also involve giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol and attempted suffocation or drowning. (OU 1989)

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when adults seek sexual gratification by using children. This may be by having sexual intercourse or anal intercourse, engaging with the child in fondling, masturbation or oral sex and includes encouraging children to watch sexually explicit behaviour or pornographic material, including videos. (OU 1989)

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where children are harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting. Refusing or failing to give adequate love and affection is a case of emotional neglect. (OU 1989)

Neglect

Neglect occurs where parents (or others) fail to meet the basic essential needs of children, like adequate food, clothes, warmth and medical care. Leaving young children alone and unsupervised is an example of neglect. (OU 1989)

Disclosure by a Pupil to a Trusted Member of Staff

If a child discloses to you that s/he is being abused, you must act as though that allegation is true. You must

Receive - listen to the child. Try not to appear shocked. Take what they say seriously. Don't ask why they haven't told you before.

Reassure - stay calm, don't panic. Try to make the child feel they are not to blame, and that they have done the right thing in telling you. Don't promise confidentiality.

React - react only as far as is necessary for you to know whether or not you need to pass on the information - don't interrogate for full details. Don't ask leading questions, just listen to what the child has to say. Explain who you will have to pass the information on to, and why.

Record - make brief notes at the time and write in additional details afterwards. Make drawings showing the positioning of any bruising, etc. Record the date and time and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour. Try to use the words of the child including slang or a child's own sexual expressions. Try to be objective and distinguish between fact and opinion. Keep your original notes.

Support - make sure the child continues to receive support. Keep the child informed, if appropriate, of what is happening. Make sure you also receive some support without revealing confidential details to other staff.

Suspicion of Abuse

Any suspicion that a pupil is being physically, emotionally or sexually abused should be brought to the immediate attention of the designated child protection officer or the Headmistress. It is most important to report any feeling or suspicion and to guard against the feeling that 'these things do not happen here'.

Individual pupils who have made an allegation will be supported by an adult of their choosing that they know and trust. Depending on the nature of the allegation the member of staff concerned may have only restricted and supervised access to the pupil pending appropriate investigations into the allegations.

In any case where the safety or the welfare of the pupil is felt to be in danger the member of staff may be suspended. The school would follow the school disciplinary procedure for any investigation regarding allegations of misconduct.

Reporting Cases to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

Staff should be aware that Lucton School, as an employer, has a duty to report cases where it has ceased to use a person's services because they are considered unsuitable to work with children, or as a result of misconduct, or because of a medical condition that raises a possibility of risk to the safety or welfare of children. This applies to any person whether they are employed, contracted, volunteers or students. These cases must be reported within one month of this person leaving the school.

The address for referral is:- The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), PO Box 181,

Darlington, DL 1 9FA. Telephone number 0300 123 1111.