

Weston All Saints C of E Primary School
POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for **CHILD PROTECTION** at Weston All Saints C of E Primary School (WASPS). It was developed during the Summer term of 2012 and last updated in March 2016 through a process of consultation with teaching staff and approved by the Governing Body.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

1. Introduction

WASPS is committed to the safeguarding of all children in its care.

The school complies with the requirements of 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' and adopts procedures which are in accordance with the B&NES inter-agency Child Protection procedures.

WASPS endeavours to make sure that procedures are in place for the following;

- Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers to work with children (see separate policy on Safe Recruitment)
- Prevention of abuse through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils including establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe
- Following procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- Support for pupils who may have been abused (Abuse comprises 'neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse and emotional abuse')

It is recognised that staff play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child abuse cooperate together for the benefit of the child. All schools have a Designated safeguarding Lead (DSL) who liaises with Social Care and with teachers in school. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every class teacher and adult within school to recognise and report concerns.

At WASPS, the Headteacher, Mrs Anne Bull, has overall responsibility for the welfare of the pupils in the school, supported by two Deputy Heads and four Assistant Heads. Sarah Halls and Sharon Badger are the people designated for Child Protection. All governors are responsible for Child Protection.

Updated Feb 2017
CHILD PROTECTION

All staff have total commitment to child protection. We raise the children's awareness about themselves through Personal, Health and Social Education and aim to develop a trusting climate so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

WASPS has a policy of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, the well-being of the child is paramount. Parents will be contacted and consulted in most cases, except where the member of staff believes the child may be put in danger or a criminal investigation may be compromised.

2. Aims

This policy endeavours to make sure that all staff and volunteers in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. The aims are:

- to raise awareness of all staff and volunteers and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- to lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

3. Information sharing and storing

The WASPS Safeguarding File is held by the Headteacher. In this is held relevant information about vulnerable children. Information is shared as appropriate with the relevant class teacher. Relevant information about any pupils who are vulnerable is shared with all teachers in order that everyone can be vigilant and prepared to handle any situations arising in the day with care and sensitivity.

4. Guidelines

In reporting concern or suspicion, all adults in school must follow the following procedures. The DSLs (Sarah Halls or Sharon Badger), will then follow the B&NES Child Protection Procedures.

If any member of staff suspects that a child in his/her care may be a victim of abuse, they will immediately inform the HT and the DTCP about their concern. All concerns are logged on a 'Concern Form'. This form is handed to the HT or an Asst HT in her absence. The DSL reports cases of abuse or suspected abuse to the Social Care team.

Adults working in the school are reminded that abuse constitutes physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect.

In following the laid down procedures our aims are to:

- protect the child to the best of our ability
- avoid delay
- provide consistency
- protect staff
- endeavour that, whether further action is taken by another agency or not, the school has followed the appropriate procedures

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. According to the Children Act, 1989, a referral should be made *'if a child is considered to be suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm'*.

If a child discloses abuse or staff are concerned about possible abuse, there are three things to remember in the first instance:

- Report the information immediately to the HT (or an Asst HT in her absence) and the DSL
- Do not speak to the parents at this stage
- Do not promise confidentiality to the child (but give a commitment to support the child).

The school's HT and DSLs work closely with the Social Care Service and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner but the interest of the child is of paramount importance throughout. If staff have concerns about another member of staff, this should be reported to the HT immediately. If the allegation is about the Headteacher, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors. The Local Safeguarding Officer should be informed of all allegations that are made against a member of staff.

If a child alleges abuse, before the school makes a referral, parents should be asked for their consent. However, if this is not given, the school will make the referral without consent. In some cases the referral will be made without seeking prior consent, in order to safeguard the child, if it is believed the safety of the child may be put at greater risk, or a criminal investigation may be jeopardised.

If a child protection referral is made, a course of action will be decided upon within one day. A case conference will then take place to share information and formulate a plan of action. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency, any meetings, case conferences or action taken will be followed through and the teacher concerned informed.

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential and we treat this accordingly. We only pass information on to the appropriate persons.

WASPS requires all adults employed or volunteering in school to have their application vetted through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse. Any interview panel must follow -Safer Recruitment procedures.

All adults in the school receive regular training in Safeguarding. This is updated every three years. The DSLs are required to have completed LA Child Protection Practices and Procedures at Level 1 and Level 2. This training will be updated every two years.

Children making an allegation often feel they will not be believed or that they will be punished. Staff should reassure the child that whatever has happened it is not their fault. Fear of the consequences of making an allegation is very common. It is crucial not to ask leading questions, but only the bare minimum of 'Tell me', 'Explain', 'Describe' questions in order to

clarify what is being said. Our role is to enable the child to speak and then know what to do next.

Staff have an important role in hearing what children have to say. The school can provide a neutral place where the child feels it is safe to talk. Sensitivity to the disclosure is vital. Staff must listen carefully to what the child is saying, treat it seriously and value what they say.

Confidential information about children causing concern is kept in the Headteacher's office in the 'Safeguarding' file and this information will be sent on to the child's next school in confidence and where relevant. This includes children who, for whatever reason, need to be monitored. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is noted in this way. Teachers must inform the HT of any changes/additions so that this list can be kept up to date.

In the unlikely event of the HT and all of the Asst HTs being unavailable to deal with an emergency involving Child Protection, then the teacher must speak to a senior teacher, who will know what to do. This would only occur in extreme circumstances.

5. Signs and symptoms – a guide

It is important to remember that the presence of one or more factors does not give proof that abuse has occurred. It may, however, indicate that investigation should take place.

- unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed
- incompatible explanations for an injury
- constant minor injuries
- unexplained bruising:
 - bruise marks in or around the mouth
 - black eyes, esp. if both eyes are black and there are no marks to forehead or nose
 - grasp marks
 - finger marks
 - bruising of the ears, or behind the ears
 - linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)
 - differing age bruising
- bite marks
- burns and scalds
- cigarette burns
- general physical disability
- unresponsiveness in the child
- soiling and wetting
- change in behavioural patterns
- 'frozen' look
- attention seeking
- apprehension

- antisocial behaviour
- unkempt appearance
- sexually precocious behaviour
- sexualised drawings and play
- sudden poor performance in school
- poor self-esteem
- self-mutilation
- withdrawal
- running away
- reluctance to return home after school
- resistance to PE (undressing)
- resistance to school medicals
- difficulty in forming relationships
- confusing affectionate displays
- poor attendance – repeated infections etc

6. Definitions of Child Abuse

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 who has suffered from physical injury, physical neglect, failure to thrive, or emotional or sexual abuse, which the person who has had custody, charge or care of the child either caused or knowingly failed to prevent. Having custody, charge or care includes any person, in whatever setting, who at the time is responsible for that child.

Physical Abuse

is a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse

is the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not truly comprehend, and to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect

is the persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example by exposure to any kind of danger including cold or starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Emotional Abuse

is the severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

7. B&NES Safeguarding procedures

These procedures will be followed in cases of reported abuse or suspicion of abuse. Copies of the procedures are held by the HT.

Central to all procedures for safeguarding is a case conference, arranged by Social Care. The following people and agencies may be involved:

- Social Care Service
- HT or DSL
- Senior Medical Officer
- Senior nurse
- NSPCC
- Probation Service
- Police
- Clinical or educational psychologist
- Consultant psychiatrist (if hospital is involved)
- Senior education welfare officer
- HT from siblings' school
- Community worker if appropriate
- Housing dept

Information concerning confirmed or suspected cases of child abuse are held in the Safeguarding File in the HT's office.

Sexual abuse cases are investigated by the Police. Social Care can be present to assist the Police when interviewing a child.

8. Monitoring and Review

The governing body regularly reviews this policy and its implementation.