

GOSCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy

GoSchool fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

1. Purpose of policy

We recognise that because of their day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities throughout the curriculum, including ICT and within pastoral sessions, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse (including online abuse)

2. Aims

This policy applies to all adults working in school.

The policy has five main elements:

- Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused or neglected in accordance with their agreed child protection plan.
- Providing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

3. Action to be taken by the school

- We have a Child Protection Officer and Deputy for child protection and safeguarding who has received appropriate training and support for this role.

Their role will include the

- Championing of child protection issues within the school and liaising with the Head of Centre as and when appropriate.
- Having an overview of the Child Protection Policy and all related policies.
- Auditing safeguarding measures annually alongside the Head of Centre.
- The Head of Centre will ensure every member of staff knows the name of the CPO responsible for child protection and safeguarding, and their role.

- The Head of Centre will ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse or neglect as well as lower-level child welfare concerns, and their responsibility for recording concerns and promptly referring any concerns to the CPO responsible for child protection and safeguarding.
- The school will follow up any unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who may be deemed to be at risk.
- The school will ensure all staff across the school receive child protection training every three years, and that lead people (CPO and their Deputy) are trained every two years.
- The school will keep written records of child welfare and child protection concerns about children, including actions taken and outcomes as appropriate.
- The school will ensure all child welfare and child protection records are kept securely, and in locked locations.
- The school will ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed.
- The school will ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for safer working practices.
- The school will ensure that any allegations against members of staff with a potential child protection aspect are dealt with following the agreed procedures – all such concerns to be dealt with urgently, with concerns about staff to be reported to the Head of Centre and concerns about the Head of Centre passed to the Academic Director/Executive Director.
- The school will ensure that the school building and site are appropriately secure, with a clear record kept of any risk assessments carried out (covered in detail within our Health and Safety Policy).
- The school will ensure that other school policies which have a safeguarding element (e.g. health and safety; anti-bullying; e-safety; behaviour) are all consistent with this policy and with each other and where appropriate make cross-reference to this policy
- Ensure all staff receive and sign for a copy of this policy.
- Ensure that parents receive information from the school about the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection.

4. Support to pupils at risk

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour management policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some types of behaviour are unacceptable, but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil leaves the school any child protection records are promptly transferred to the new school.

5.Process for considering and acting on concerns about child abuse

All staff should be able to identify and act on concerns about child abuse.

The types of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Emotional (including seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another)

Alcohol/ Drug Use and Child Protection

The discovery that a young person is using alcohol/illegal drugs or reported evidence of their use is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings, but the school will consider such action in the following situations:

When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- To believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to abuse such as sexual abuse.
- To believe the pupil's drug related behaviour is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults.
- Where the misuse is suspected of being prompted by serious parent/carer drug misuse.

Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

The school will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring character and reference checks are followed up.

- The school will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the school.
- The school will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with pupils and parents.
- The school will ensure that all staff are aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them.
- We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimum force necessary to prevent injury to themselves, another person or property.

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy is set out in a separate document and reviewed annually. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

Recording and reporting concerns

- Where any adult in the school has concerns about a child, they should discuss these in the first instance with the CPO, or in their absence, the Deputy.
- Discussions should be recorded on the school CP record form, with details of the concern and any agreed action that is to be taken.
- The record must be signed and dated and kept securely.
- The CPO is responsible for ensuring that concerns and discussions are written up properly and acted on appropriately.
- As a school we recognise that children will talk to an adult they know and trust and therefore our expectation is that this person will listen to the child about their concerns and then report this to the CPO.
- The child should not then be asked to repeat their story unless the school has been advised by the relevant authorities to seek more information.
- When a child discloses abuse to an adult in the school, that person is responsible for making a written record of the disclosure as soon as possible after the event and reporting it urgently to the CPO or their Deputy.
- The CPO will consider the next steps to be taken, including referral to the Head of Centre and relevant authorities.