

Title	Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse - Procedures and Guidelines
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Treloar School

Protecting Children and Young People from Abuse

Procedures and Guidelines

PRINCIPLES

- **The welfare of the child is paramount.**
- **All staff are responsible for Child Protection.**
- **All** staff must take responsibility for understanding the procedures.
- If abuse is suspected, your suspicions must be reported. Failure to do so is a disciplinary matter.
- Any area of doubt or concern regarding these procedures should be referred to the CPO (Child Protection Officer).
- The CPO at school is Jane Headford – Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral). In her absence, the Deputy CPO is Sue Evans (a nurse in the school Medical Centre). The Link Governor for Child Protection is Carol Hehir.

CHILD ABUSE has been defined as 'harm to children under the age of 18, by parents, carers or others, either by direct acts, or by failure to prevent abuse from happening'.

There are four categories of abuse

1. **Physical abuse** – is the actual or likely physical injury to a child, or the failure to prevent injury. This can include bodily assaults such as bruises, burns, abrasions, fractures, dislocations, wounds or marks of physical restraint.
2. **Neglect** – is the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect the child from exposure to any kind of danger. This can include failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, or the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing and heating. The persistent failure to provide these necessities can result in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.
3. **Emotional abuse** – the severe or persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child which leads to adverse effects on a child's behavioural and emotional development. It might include bullying, shouting, threats of harm or abandonment, persistent ignoring, undermining, ridiculing, racial abuse, deprivation of contact, blaming or controlling.
4. **Sexual abuse** – forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual acts, whether or not the child understands what is happening, or is unable to give informed consent. It is also the failure to prevent the sexual exploitation of a child. It can involve adults known to the child, (including family members), carers, or other children. Sexual activity can include caressing, or fondling, mutual masturbation, penetration or non-penetrative acts, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts, or to be allowed access to any pornographic activities.

RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

The following are indicators (not confirmation) of abuse.

- Staff need to be aware that a student may disclose information about abuse.
- The child has an injury for which the explanation appears to be inconsistent.
- The child's behaviour, personality or performance may change. He/she may become more aggressive or alternatively, withdrawn or sexually explicit.
- The child may appear not to trust adults with whom they would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and do not appear to be able to mix socially or make friends.
- His/her appearance may look increasingly neglected or he/she may lose or put on weight for no apparent reason.
- The child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his/her age or cognitive ability, and may sometimes behave in sexually explicit ways.

There are other signs or symptoms of child abuse. These are discussed in the compulsory Child Protection training for staff.

Staff need to be aware that care must be taken not to make assumptions or to misinterpret information.

It is **not** your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused.

It is your responsibility to act on your concerns immediately.

Never assume that someone else will have reported the same concern.

Any concerns that you have about a child should be reported. You should record, date and sign the information and pass to Jane Headford (CPO) and Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) as soon as possible.

You must also keep in mind that disabled children and vulnerable young people are particularly open to abuse, and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening (or has happened), to them.

STAFF TRAINING

The CPO will undergo training every two years in order to update her knowledge.

All Child Protection training at the school is delivered by the CPO.

All new staff have an Introduction to Child Protection training at Induction.

All staff must undergo a more in-depth Child Protection training course within the first 3/4 months of their employment with the Trust.

All staff must update their training every three years.

PROCEDURES IN CASES OF SUSPECTED OR ACTUAL CHILD ABUSE

If a disclosure of abuse is made to a member of staff, the following procedure must be followed:-

- Listen attentively to what the student is saying and show them that you believe everything that is being said.
- Do not interrupt or challenge what the child is saying.
- Do not ask leading questions (thereby putting suggestions forward). If you need to ask a question to clarify a point at the end of the disclosure, then only ask an open question (these questions cannot be answered by a 'yes' or 'no')
- Thank the student for confiding in you and reassure them that they were right to do so.
- Staff must make it clear to the student that such information cannot be heard in total confidence; tell them that you will need to inform the CPO who will be able to help.
- The details of the disclosure should be written down, signed and dated by you as soon as possible, (not in front of the student), and passed to the CPO.
- The matter should be treated with complete confidentiality.
- Any member of staff who receives a disclosure of abuse, or has reasonable concern to believe that abuse has taken place, can refer to a senior member of staff, but **must** refer to the CPO.
- **No further interviewing of the student should take place in school by any member of staff.**
- The CPO and the Headteacher will then agree a plan of action.
- All details, including the plan of action will be recorded by the CPO and kept in the locked CPO file.
- Any referral to Social Services must be made within 24 hours.
- Communication with carers and parents will be followed up by the CPO, as and when appropriate, and on the advice of the Social Care Team.
- The task of deciding whether or not, abuse has occurred, rests with the professional agencies (Children's Social Care and the Police) – not school staff.

ACTION CONCERNING MEDICAL EXAMINATION

If recent sexual assault is suspected, in order to preserve forensic evidence, the student should not be medically examined other than by a Doctor approved by Social Services or the Police. An exception may be made if there appears to be injuries so severe as to require immediate medical attention.

ACTION CONCERNING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in order to provide effective protection for the child and at the same time, support the person who is subject of the allegation.

The procedure for dealing with allegations against a member of staff should deal with all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.

- Committed a criminal offence against a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

In cases where abuse of a student by a member of staff is suspected or alleged, the following procedure should be followed.

- Allegations should be reported to the Headteacher and CPO straight away.
- If an allegation is made against the Headteacher or the CPO then it should be reported to the Chair of the Governors and the Chief Executive.
- Any allegation made against a member of staff must be reported to the Chair of Governors and the Chief Executive.
- An accurate written record of the allegation must be made.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (Barbara Piddington) must be contacted and will advise the school about the next step to take.
- In the absence of the Designated Officer, the school will be directed to the locality team, Team Manager or Duty Manager.
- Following discussion, the decision needs to be made whether it's a Child Protection case, disciplinary investigation or whether the allegation is unfounded.
- If the case involves any of the four categories of abuse, then this must take priority and a Child Protection referral must be made.
- The school will also need to take advice from the Local Authority Designated officer regarding informing parents and the accused.
- The school will take no further action as the police and/or Social Care will then proceed with the investigation.
- The CPO will inform Ofsted.

Depending upon the circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff on full pay without prejudice, while investigations are carried out. The student concerned, will receive help and support from relevant staff. The member of staff accused of the allegation will also receive support from a named senior member of staff.

In addition to the **Child Protection Policy**, all staff must read and understand the **Whistleblowing Policy**. If anyone has a suspicion about another member of staff, they must report it to the CPO. Failure to do so, is a disciplinary matter. It is also essential that staff know and follow the content of the School '**Guidelines for Professional Practice**', in order to ensure student and staff protection. Staff also need to read the **E-Safety Policy**.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY AND STATUTORY PROVISION IN CHILD ABUSE

Local Authority Children's Social Care have the primary responsibility for the care and protection of children who are abused or at risk of abuse. They have a duty to investigate any information received suggesting that a child may be in need of protection (Section 47 of the Children Act 1989). This is usually done jointly with the Police.

ALTON SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT: Tel. 01420 544255

CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR/Allegations Officer (Schools and Education) – Barbara Piddington

Winchester Local Office – Tel. 01962 876265 / 07903 649503

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These procedures have been produced in consultation with the Hampshire Child Protection Co-ordinator for Schools and Education and in accordance with DCSF and LSCB Guidelines.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)
- Children Act 2006