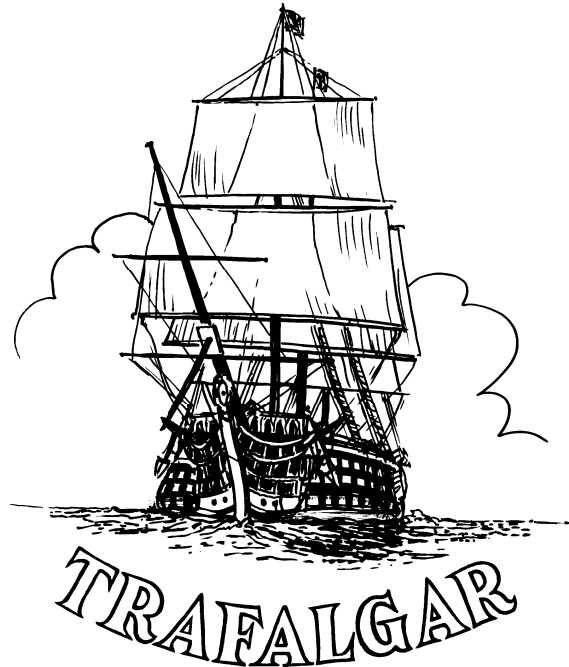


Trafalgar Community Infant School



Policy Document

CHILD PROTECTION

Trafalgar is a Rights Respecting School. We refer to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) throughout this policy.

RATIONALE

At Trafalgar we agree that the safety and protection of all pupils is of paramount importance and that all staff will adhere to this policy and the child protection procedures established by the area Child protection Committee (ACPC). In all cases we will work appropriately with each child, his/her family and other agencies to protect the child.

AIMS

To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases.

To provide guidance on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher/ designated person

The Head teacher is the designated teacher for child protection. In her absence the deputy head should be approached. They are responsible for:

- co-coordinating action within the school and liaising with Social Care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- acting as a source of advice within the school
- ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures
- referring individual cases of suspected abuse
- organising training on child protection

Where verbal referrals are made to social care, the referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Where there is uncertainty about making a full referral, advice can still be sought from the social care department without giving the child's details.

Staff

New staff are informed of the main points of this child protection policy through the staff handbook and the induction programme.

All staff need to be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy. They should report any concerns immediately, where possible to the designated teacher or their deputy. If in any doubt they should consult with the designated person.

Apply the procedures detailed below for responding to a suspected case remembering that:

- you cannot promise confidentiality
- information should only be shared with those who need to know
- it is important to stay calm and reassuring
- the needs and safety of the child must always come first
- when in doubt - ask

Governors

The Governing Body has an important role in monitoring the operation of the school's child protection policy and the effectiveness of its procedures, training and curricular provision. This will be carried out through:

- the normal monitoring and review programme of the curriculum and personnel committees
- the Chair acting as designated governor to whom the designated teacher can refer
- receiving and discussing the designated teacher's annual report as part of the Head's Report to Governors
- participating in the annual review of this policy
- attending appropriate training

GUIDANCE ON RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report them to the appropriate party.

The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

Physical abuse

This can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child. Possible signs include:

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Improbable explanations of injuries
- Untreated injuries or lingering illness
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Shrinking from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or parents being contacted
- Fear of undressing
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression / bullying
- Over compliant behaviour
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour
- Deterioration in work
- Unexplained pattern of absences

Emotional abuse

This is persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It can include:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved
- placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children
- making children feel frightened or in danger on a frequent basis

Possible signs include:

- Continual self-deprecation

- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Compulsive stealing / scrounging
- Drug / solvent abuse
- 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb sucking
- Air of detachment a 'don't care' attitude
- Social isolation
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems
- Depression, withdrawal

Sexual abuse

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. They can include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible signs include:

- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
- Pregnancy
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
- Frequent public masturbation
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends

Neglect

Neglect is also a form of abuse. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment.

Possible signs include:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant tiredness
- Low warmth, high criticism

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

- physical
- verbal
- emotional

All incidents of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. (See Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies.)

Self harm

If it comes to the attention of a teacher/member of staff that a child is self-harming, they alert the designated person for child protection. Actions by the designated teacher might include:

- contacting parents
- contacting Child Adolescent Mental Health Services
- contacting Social Care if the child meets the referral criteria

CHILD PROTECTION AND INTERNET USE

At Trafalgar we recognise the value of the internet as a tool and a resource for enhancing learning. We are also aware of the potential hazards of internet use and the child protection issues involved. The Acceptable Use Policy details the measures in place to ensure pupils are protected on line and access the internet correctly and safely. It includes:

- ensuring parents sign the appropriate usage agreements
- ensuring filters and other security features are in place and up-to-date
- monitoring pupil use of the internet

All planning for the development of ICT will take account of child protection issues.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF PUPIL IMAGES

As well as human rights and data protection issues, the taking and using of pupil photographs – whether still or video – also have child protection implications. At Trafalgar we adhere to the “Photographic Images of Children Guidelines” issued by West Sussex in May 2008 which form the basis of our practice.

GUIDANCE ON DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ABUSE

All staff should refer concerns to the designated person as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance
- observe bruises but should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them
- if a disclosure is made the child should lead the discussion. Do not press for details by asking questions
- Listen – don’t investigate using questions such as “is there anything else you’d like to tell me?”
- Accept what the pupil says without challenge – reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them
- Don’t lay blame or criticise either the child or the alleged perpetrator
- Don’t promise confidentiality. Tell them they have done the right thing and who you will need to tell and why

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING, RECORDING AND REPORTING

At the time

Brief notes at the time or immediately after will help you to complete the **critical incident sheet** when you are able. You should note:

- Date and time of disclosure/incident observed
- Place and context of disclosure or concern
- Facts you need to report –do not make judgments or assumptions

When you can

Complete a **critical incident sheet** and pass to the designated person.

In the case of there being bruises or observed injuries, the **body map** should be completed.

Remember to keep to factual information and not assumption or interpretation. Use the child's own language to quote rather than translating into your own terms. Be aware that these sheets may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency.

Designated person

The designated person will:

- Follow-up the referral using the critical incident sheet as a basis for consideration before action
- Make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place
- Make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further. This decision should be communicated to the individual making the initial referral
- Where a child is newly referred to social care a referral form must be completed and sent within 24 hours

Recorded information from social care meetings and other reports are stored in separate document wallets next to the child's records in secure cabinets in the school office. Any documents for inclusion in this folder should be given directly to the head teacher.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

All allegations should be reported to the designated person or to the Chair of Governors as appropriate who will deal with the allegations following guidance set out by the Area Child Protection Committee.

The LA child protection officer should be contacted immediately with any concerns by the designated person or the Chair of Governors.

INTER-AGENCY LIAISON/SOCIAL CARE MEETINGS

At times school staff will be called to participate in meetings organized and chaired by social care. These might be:

- Strategy discussion
- The child protection review conference
- Child protection conferences
- Family group conferences - for children in need, in a range of circumstances where a plan is required for the child's future welfare

- Professionals' meetings – in which representatives from different agencies meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement
- Core group meetings – meeting in which a 'core' group of professionals associated with the family meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews

At these meetings, representatives from the school should be ready to report providing information about:

- attendance and punctuality
- academic achievement
- the child's behaviour and attitude
- relationships with peer group and social skills generally
- child's appearance and readiness for school
- contact with parents / carers
- any specific incidents that need reporting

Prior to the meeting, class teachers and other adults working closely with the child should be asked for their comments. Following the meeting feedback should be given and staff brought up to date with any actions that are needed.

THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

Children placed on the register will require additional support and monitoring. The social care department will inform the school receiving a child on the register and accompanying records should follow from the child's previous school.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Where children are on the child protection register and leave one school for another, the designated person informs the receiving school and the key worker at the social care department. If the child has no receiving school, details are passed to the principle ESW.

We have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. We do not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed and that this is for their own sake.

All staff are kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Discretion should be used when talking about the personal, and changing circumstances of children e.g. when a child goes into care. Care is particularly necessary after attending child protection meetings. Information received is treated sensitively and with discretion.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT RISK

For children at risk, school may be the one stable place from which they can expect security and reassurance.

The pastoral support programme

Children who are 'looked after' should have their own pastoral support programme which will be drawn up in discussion with social care, the class teacher, foster parents and the child.

Support in school – nurture group

A nurture group can provide children with the opportunity to work in a small group with dedicated staff who have time to listen and provide children with the opportunities to discuss concerns.

Children are referred for a short period of time during times of crisis or for a longer, more extended period as the need arises.

Support in school – pastoral care

All school staff are responsible for the pastoral needs of the children in their care.

Support in school – the curriculum

Within our curriculum there will also be opportunities to discuss issues which some children might find sensitive.

We make ourselves familiar with the background of the children in our care in order to avoid children becoming distressed.

Physical contact with pupils

Some form of physical contact with pupils by teachers is inevitable. In some cases it is necessary for reassurance. In the event of physical restraint being used it is important that only the minimum amount is used in order to prevent the pupil from causing injury to themselves, others or property. Following such an intervention the critical incident form should be completed.

Where teachers or support staff have not had training in restraint, they should refer if possible to a member of staff who has.

Working with parents

We have an established approach to working with parents and recognize that parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected.

Attitudes to and contact with parents is non-judgmental in order to obtain the most conducive working relationship. Parents are made aware of this policy annually and copies are available on request.

We recognise that families from different backgrounds and cultures have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences are acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined earlier in the document. We do have access to support for parents where it is felt that this would be useful. This includes:

- Home/ school liaison :
- Counselling support:

RELATED POLICIES

All school policies take account of child protection issues.

REVIEW AND MONITOR

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if legislation should change.

Date: September 2011

Date for review: September 2012