

Bexley Grammar School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to promote the well-being of all children and to safeguard and protect those who are at risk of abuse or neglect.

The policy and its associated procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the *London Child Protection Procedures 2010*, and reflects the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006*.

The safeguarding of children is everyone's business. Schools have a responsibility under *Section 175* of the *Education Act 2002* and *Section 11* of the *Children's Act 2004* to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes: -

- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

The *Children's Act 2004* defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years; it also defines significant harm and the roles and responsibilities of Children's Social Care and the Police.

Significant Harm - There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and / or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment.

Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning). More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

The following procedures outline the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be being abused, harmed or neglected. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

A child can be abused, harmed or neglected in a family, institution or community setting by someone known to them, or less commonly, by a stranger; this includes someone in a position of trust such as a teacher or other professional.

Safeguarding and the promotion of a child's welfare covers all aspects of the child's life and the school is committed to ensuring that all of its actions in respect for a child are compatible with this aim. If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the school will consider whether the *Common Assessment Framework (CAF)* approach should be considered. The early identification of concerns and the use of the CAF to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

Policy Statement

Bexley Grammar School is committed to provide a learning environment which protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers at the school accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

2 Scope

This policy and the following procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and governors working with or in the school.

3 Aim

We will safeguard children by: -

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

Because of the 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 whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from harm or abuse.

4 Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by *London Child Protection Procedures* and *Local Safeguarding Children Board* and take account of guidance issued by the *Department for Education* to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. *This will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the School.*
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governor knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse, and their responsibility for referring any concerns that they might have to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who has a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences and Core Groups
- Keep written chronological records of incidents and concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a secure location.
- Follow London Borough of Bexley procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

5 Definitions of abuse

These definitions are based on those from '*Working together to Safeguard Children*' (2006) and '*London Child Protection Procedures*' (2010).

Physical abuse - physical abuse may take many forms such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is now described as fabricated or induced illness in a child

Emotional abuse - is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve: -

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations
- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger - e.g. witnessing domestic violence
- Exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

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 and includes penetrative acts (i.e. oral, vaginal or anal) and non-penetrative acts.

It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect - involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development.

This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical/physical care or treatment e.g. correct maintenance of wheelchairs, use of body braces etc. Supply of medication needed according to care plans. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

6 Signs & Symptoms of Abuse

Guidance on recognising signs & symptoms of can be found in the *London Child Protection Procedures (2007, Chapter 4)*. The following may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. This is not an exclusive list and many of the signs and symptoms could fall into more than one category.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained and so called "accidental" injuries, burns or bruising
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Refusal to undress for PE
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development delays
- Sudden speech disorders

- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Unusual attention seeking behaviour
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Itchy or pain in the genital area
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies
- Stealing food/money
- Poor school attendance
- Compulsive attention seeking

Pupils with Learning Difficulties – Pupils with learning difficulties often exhibit some of these signs (e.g. reluctance to get undressed for P.E., constant tiredness) which are not necessarily signs of abuse but symptoms of their condition. It must also be remembered that disabled children are 3 times more likely to experience abuse or neglect than non-disabled peers.

7 Reporting incidents and Concerns

If you suspect that abuse may have occurred **you must report the concerns immediately** to the Designated Person, Mr S. Elphick or in his absence, Mr J. Welsh.

The Designated Person has been nominated by *Bexley Grammar School* to maintain the written records of incidents and concerns, and to report allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

The role of the designated person is to: -

- Act as the confidential recipient of information from staff, governors, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns, and to record this information.

- Assess the information quickly and carefully, and ask for further information as appropriate.
- Consult with Children's Social Care at the first opportunity
 - Bexley Safeguarding Children Service - 01322 356302 (9–5 pm)
 - East Child Care Duty Team - 0203 045 5440 (9–5 pm)
 - West Child Care Duty Team - 0203 045 5440 (9–5 pm)
 - Bexley **Emergency** Duty Service - **0208 303 7777** (o/s 9-5)
 - or the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Team on 0207 230 3700 (8–6pm; calls outside these hours should be made to the non-emergency number 101) to clarify any doubts or worries.
 - The NSPCC can also provide advice.
- The designated person should make a referral to the *Children's Social Care* or the Police without delay if it is agreed during the consultation, or if there is an immediate risk to the child.
- The referral should normally be made to the *Children's Social Care Agency* in which the child lives, e.g. if a child lives in another borough, the referral needs to be made to the Children's Social Care Department in that borough. In Bexley, depending on the child's address, referrals are made to either *East or West Child Care Teams*.
- A telephone referral should be made and confirmed in writing using an inter-agency referral form within 48 hours. *Children's Social Care* should acknowledge the referral within one working day and should be contacted if no acknowledgement has been received within 3 working days. Any referrals that are faxed to *Children Social Care* should be followed up by a telephone call to confirm receipt.
- Following referral, *Children's Social Care* should, within one working day, consider the next course of action, record their decision in writing and notify the designated person.

Concerns will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated designated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is then your responsibility to consider contacting the child protection agencies directly.

8 Responding to a child making an allegation/disclosure of abuse

If a child discloses or alleges that they have been abused: -

- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking leading questions.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated
- Pass this information on immediately to your Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person in his/her absence.

After a child has disclosed abuse the designated person should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Children's Social Care to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

9 Responding to Allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer

In principle we will: -

- Identify a named Senior Manager responsible for managing allegations
- Ensure the child's welfare is paramount
- Ensure all reports or disclosure that indicate that an adult staff member or volunteer has: -
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child, or
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

are fully recorded and notified to Schools HR and a consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is undertaken in all cases ensuring that the appropriate action is taken.

- Ensure that the adult about whom there are concerns is treated fairly and honestly and provided with support
- Consider the safety & welfare of other children in the class/school
- Remember that disciplinary action is the responsibility of the school but that any decisions should be made in consultation with the LADO and, if involved, the police.
- Work with the LADO to keep the child and their family fully informed in relation to any investigation and subsequent action.

Bexley 'LSCB procedures on allegations against school staff, other workers or volunteers' gives details of the actions to be taken.

10 Recruitment and appointment of staff and volunteers

In recruiting and appointing staff at *Bexley Grammar*, we will be responsible for the following: -

- Identifying the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- Drawing up the selection criteria and putting together a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- All applicants should apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.
- We may send a copy of our child protection policy with the application pack.
- We will make sure that we measure the application against the selection criteria
- All applicants will sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with children. The *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)* requires that people applying for positions which give them "substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis" to children under the age of 18 must declare all previous convictions and are subject to police

checks. They are also required to declare any pending case against them. Prospective staff will only be offered a job subject to a 'successful' police check. This includes potential employees, volunteers and self-employed people such as sports coaches. All information furnished as part of an application will be dealt with confidentially and fairly.

- We will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of applicants, normally a current passport and recent proof of address.
- We will request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.
- We will always interview our candidates for a job.
- We will have at least two people from the school on the interview panel one of whom must have successfully completed safer recruitment training.
- We will request two written references from previous employers. We will ask the referee to also comment on their suitability for working with children. If necessary we will also try and follow up written references with a telephone call.
- We will ensure that our successful applicant obtains an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate (ECRC) from the Criminal Records Bureau. We will need to see the ECRC before we confirm them in post.
- We will ensure that we are compliant with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) requirements We will ensure that all new staff are registered with the ISA and that all existing staff apply for ISA registration in line with the timescales as issued by the ISA starting with those with the oldest ECRC.
- When using supply teachers, the school will ensure that the agency has undertaken appropriate checks. The supply teacher will be asked to provide evidence before they start work in the form of two types of identification such as their photographic ID as well as a letter from the agency.

Refer to standard recruitment and appointment policy for staff recruitment for details of these procedures.

11 In recruiting and appointing volunteers *Bexley Grammar* will be responsible for the following:

- All volunteers will be asked to provide a brief written application confirming their details, experience, etc.
- All volunteers will be interviewed.
- Currently there is discretion in respect of detailing enhanced CRB checks on all volunteers. This decision must be made by the Head Teacher and will be based on the duties that the volunteer will be involved in.
- Under ISA regulations all volunteers will be required to register with the ISA if they have frequent (more than once a month) or intensive (3 consecutive days &/or overnight) contact with children from the school. We will ensure that this is complied with as guidance on timescales is issued by the ISA.
- Whenever possible a volunteer should be asked for references. It is acknowledged that this may not be from an employer but can be a personal reference.

- All volunteers should receive an induction and be given clear written guidance on responsibilities, acceptable behaviour and limits to their role.

12 Supervisory arrangements for the management of out of school hours activities.

We will aim to protect children from abuse and team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines: -

- All clubs independent of the school must have their own child protection policy & procedure in line with this policy.
- The club will keep a register of all children attending the activities and give a copy to the school.
- The club will keep a register of all team members (both paid staff members and volunteers) and ensure they are CRB checked and registered with the ISA.
- Registers will include arrival and departure times.
- The club will keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- Team members will record any unusual events on an accident / incident form.
- Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending the activities.
- Team members should not be alone with a child, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful; in such circumstances another adult should be told.
- Team members may escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian and a care plan is in place for the child naming them as part of the care plan.
- All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in both attitude language and actions.

13 Management of Children subject to Child Protection Investigation or subject to a Child Protection Plan

When a student is the subject of a Child Protection Conference:

- The Designated Person will contribute to the child protection investigation and contribute to the Strategy meetings.
- The Designated Person will attend the Initial Child Protection Conference to share any relevant information and provide a written report for the conference.
- If the child is placed on the Child Protection Plan, the Designated Person is responsible for ensuring that the school participates appropriately in the Child Protection Plan and attends all Core Group Meetings and Child Protection Conferences.
- Information will be shared with staff on a need to know basis; key personnel working with a child should have sufficient information to support them in their work with that child.
- If a child with a Child Protection Plan has an unexplained absence from school, the Designated Person will inform the Social Worker.

14 Support and Training

We are committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all our team members.

In addition to the basic safeguarding training, the Designated Person will undertake the training in inter-agency working that is provided by the Bexley LSCB, and attend refresher training at 2 yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge and skill up to date.

All other staff will undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, and attend refresher training at 3 yearly intervals.

15 Record Keeping

DFE guidance requires the Designated Person to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals and concerns. These should be kept separately from academic records, in a confidential file stored in a secure cabinet, accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. They are exempt from records available for examination by parents or children unless subject to a court order.

Bexley LSCB promotes high quality record keeping in respect of all concerns about children's welfare. The records should be completed in a timely manner and include all relevant information such as dates, times, others involved, witnesses etc. All records should be signed and dated. The child's confidential record should include a front sheet chronology of concerns to support the understanding of the impact of past concerns, patterns and escalation of concerns.

If a child transfers to another school or other educational establishment, the Designated Person should forward the child protection file to a named person at the receiving school / establishment under separate cover from the academic records. The file should be marked '*confidential, to be opened by addressee only.*'

The Designated Person should retain a copy of the child protection file, which should be stored in a secure cabinet accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. Child Protection records about a pupil who has ceased to become of compulsory school age should be archived and catalogued. When making a referral, the referrer should keep a written record of: -

- Discussions with child
- Discussions with parent/s
- Discussions with staff
- Information provided to Children's Social Care
- Advice given and decisions taken (clearly times, dated and signed)

The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours, using the interagency referral form.

The School will ensure that we keep up-to-date personal data records of all the children by regularly reminding parents to inform us of any change in family circumstances and requesting an annual update.

16 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Head teacher or Designated Person will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

When considering sharing information the staff will consider the seven golden rules:

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information; it provides the framework for lawful sharing.
2. Be open and honest with the person from the outset about how information may be shared.
3. Seek advice; do not fail to share information because you are unsure what to do.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and respect the wishes of those who refuse consent unless you believe that there is a risk of harm to child if the information is not shared.
5. Consider safety and well being of the child and base information sharing decisions on this.
6. Ensure all information shared is Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Accurate, Timely and Secure. Ensure any third party or hearsay information is identified and that you have consent to share it.
7. Keep a record of your decision and reasons for it, record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with their parents / carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with Children's Social Care or Bexley Safeguarding Children Service (01322 356302) on this point.

17 Whistle Blowing

Staff should be aware that children may feel unable to express concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should therefore feel free to voice concerns about the attitude and actions of their colleagues in accordance with the school's whistleblowing policy.

18 Safer working practice for staff

All staff, male and female, should be aware of the potential risk of false allegations when interviewing a pupil alone, particularly if the pupil has an experience of sexual/emotional abuse.

Interviewing Pupils

Interviewing individual pupils is an integral part of our work and therefore staff should exercise their own professional judgement and a degree of caution in these situations. All staff should try to ensure that they do not place themselves in a compromising position where allegations can be made against them. Suggested protective measures to consider include: -

- asking another person (teacher or pupil's friend – as appropriate to the content) to sit in on the interview.

- sit in a room where it is possible to be observed through a window or glass-panelled door:
- do not close the door of the room, if you are not clearly visible from outside the room.

Transporting Pupils

Situations often arise which require a member of staff to take a pupil home; two staff members should normally undertake this to minimise risks.

Use of Technology

All staff in our school use technology to support and promote the learning and welfare of the children. Certain principles should be remembered: -

- On some trips it is advantageous for staff and students to be contactable by mobile phone. When this is the case, staff will have access to a school mobile phone, the number of which will be included in the trip information sent to parents. Some staff prefer to give their own mobile number in this information in which case the risk assessment must clearly identify that this number is not to be used by parents or students after the conclusion of the trip. Aside from the above circumstances, staff will not give any child their personal mobile phone number.
- With the consent of parents, student mobile phone numbers may also be recorded for trips or for activities such as work experience when it can be the most appropriate way for the school to contact a student. When contacting a student on a mobile phone, including by voicemail or text, staff will be brief and will restrict the conversation to matters regarding the educational activity in which the student is involved.
- Staff will ensure that Bluetooth connectivity on all personal mobiles and laptops is disabled when on school premises.
- Communication by email should only be through the school's email system and personal emails will not be shared with children.
- Staff will ensure that they follow the School's 'Acceptable Internet use' policy about access to and use of the internet. Staff will NOT access or expose children or young people to unsuitable material on the internet.

This policy was adopted on 24th November 2011.

This policy will be reviewed by the 31st of October 2012

Mr S Elphick	
Designated Person	Signature
Mr J Welsh	
Deputy Designated Person	Signature
Mrs D Briant/Mrs J Lewis	
'Named' Governor for Child Protection	Signature
Mr A Woodcock	
Chair of Governors	Signature