

Bexley Grammar School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to safeguard and protect children who are at risk of abuse or neglect and promote their well-being. This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the **London Safeguarding Children Procedures**. This policy also reflects the requirements of **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006**.

The safeguarding of children is everyone's business and schools have a responsibility under Sec 175 of the Education Act 2002 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 Act 1989 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

It is acknowledged that 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 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. Remember 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.

Scope of the Policy

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

Policy Statement

We at Bexley Grammar are committed to practice, which protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm.

Aims:

We will aim to 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.
- We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

We recognise that 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.

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 Children, Schools and Families 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 governing body 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 responsibility for referring any concerns 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 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 secure locations.
- 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.

1. Definitions of abuse

These definitions are based on those from '*Working together to Safeguard Children*' (2006) and '*London Child Protection Procedures*' (2007).

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. 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

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

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 (i.e. vaginal or anal rape or buggery) 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

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.

2. Possible Signs & Symptoms of Abuse

The following signs 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. Guidance on recognising signs & symptoms of can be found in Chapter 4 of London Child Protection Procedures (2007). Also 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. However it must also be remembered that disabled children are 3 times more likely to experience abuse or neglect than non-disabled peers.

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

3. What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

a. You must report the concerns immediately to the designated person *Mr D Morgan* or in their absence *Mr J Welsh*

The Designated Person has been nominated by *Bexley Grammar School* to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of *Mr D Morgan*, please report the case to *Mr J Welsh*.

The role of the designated person is to:

- Obtain information from staff, 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.
- They should also consult with Children's Social Care in the first instance:
 - **Bexley Safeguarding Children Service - 01322 356302 (9– 5 pm)**
 - **East Child Care Duty Team - 020 8294 6287 (9 – 5 pm)**
 - **West Child Care Duty Team – 020 8320 6330 (9 – 5 pm)**
 - **Bexley Emergency Duty Service – 0208 303 7777 (outside of office hours including weekends)**

or Police Child Abuse Investigation Team on 0207 230 3700 (8am – 6pm or calls outside these hours should be made to 999) 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 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.

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

c. 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.

4. Responding to a child making an allegation/disclosure of abuse

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- 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
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking leading questions.
- 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.

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

Refer to Bexley LSCB procedures on allegations against school staff, other workers or volunteers for the detailed actions to be taken. In principle we at (name of school) 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
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

Is fully recorded and is 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.

6. Recruitment and appointment of workers and volunteers

Refer to standard recruitment and appointment policy for staff recruitment. In recruiting and appointing workers we at *Bexley Grammar*, 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 need to 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 which are then subject to police checks. They can then only be offered a job subject to a successful

police check. This includes potential employees, volunteers and self-employed people such as sports coaches. They are also required to declare any pending case against them. It is important that your applicant in this particular category understands that all information will be dealt with confidentially and will not be used against them unfairly.

- We will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of the applicant e.g. their passport & 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 our organisation 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 as they are phased in from 12 October 2009. From July 2010 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).

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. However under the 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.

- **7. 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 the school's
- 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 subsequently registered with the ISA as it is phased in.
- Registers will include arrival and departure times.
- The club will keep a record of all sessions including monitoring and evaluation records.
- The 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.

8. Management of Children subject to Child Protection Investigation or subject to a Child Protection Plan:

- Contribute to the child protection investigation (sec 47) and attend or 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 but key personnel working with 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.

9. 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 undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by the Bexley LSCB, and refresher training at 2 yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge and skill up to date.

All other staff undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training at 3 yearly intervals.

10. Record Keeping

- DCSF guidance says that the Designated person should 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:
 - i. Discussions with child
 - ii. Discussions with parent/s
 - iii. Discussions with staff
 - iv. Information provided to Children's Social Care
 - v. 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.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We recognise that 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.
- However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. Guidance can be found at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00340/> 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
 2. Be open & 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 & 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 & 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 the 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.

12. 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 council's whistleblowing policy.

13. Safer working practice for staff

1. Interviewing Pupils

All staff, male or female, should be aware of the potential risks (i.e. false allegations against staff) of interviewing a pupil alone, particularly if the pupil has an experience of sexual/emotional abuse. 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 are not in a compromising position where allegations can be made against them.

Suggested protective measures to consider:

- ask 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.

2. Transporting Pupils

Situations often arise, which require a member of staff to take a pupil home. Staff should be aware of the risks involved in this; when a pupil has to be taken home, a male teacher should not normally transport a girl in his car unless he is accompanied by a female colleague. It may be better for female staff to carry out this task so that male staff can be protected from false allegations. No staff should be alone with a pupil in this situation.

3. Use of Technology

All staff in our school will use technology to support and promote the learning and welfare of the children. However certain safeguards should be remembered:

- On some trips it is advantageous for staff and pupils to be contactable by mobile phone. When this is the case the staff mobile numbers will be included in the trip information sent to parents. 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. Aside from this, staff will not give any child their personal mobile phone number. 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 Bluetooth is disabled when on school premises on all personal mobiles and laptops

- Communication by email should only be through the school's email system and personal emails must not be shared with children
- Use of Internet: Staff will NOT access or expose children or young people to unsuitable material on the internet. Staff will ensure that they follow the School's 'Acceptable Internet use' policy about access to and use of the internet.

Note

This policy was adopted on..26/11/2009...

This policy will be reviewed on..30/10/2010.....

_____ Mr D Morgan _____
Designated Person **Signature**

_____ Mr J Welsh _____
Deputy Designated Person *(if applicable)* **Signature**

_____ Mrs D Briant/Mrs J Lewis _____
'Named' Governor for Child Protection **Signature**

_____ Mr A Woodcock _____
Chair of Governors **Signature**

